

**UNIVERSITY OF TAMPERE**

**Developing Youth's Multicultural Perspective  
within Media Education**

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2015 European immigration crises accelerated the speed of globalization and desperate need of multicultural education. This study attempts to show how we can implement multicultural learning within media education especially in informal and nonlocal settings, including online platforms for youth. To illustrate how global media literacy, within both digital and non-digital context, figures its form regarding cultural learning, this study analyzes youths' way of perception and their developments toward other cultures by using multi-modal tools.

This study was carried out in an upper secondary school in one of the Top 3 populated cities of Finland. 4-hour-length of cultural lectures using various media tools, movie appreciation, internet surfing, VR (Virtual Reality) tool utilization, and lastly a media content creation serve this study as an empirical case, a generic concept of qualitative action research. The findings indicate that overall session of combining cultural studies to geographical class aided the students to engage in and to develop their media literacy. Moreover, the project gave the participants a chance to rethink concepts of the difference and others. This study implicates the probability of having better efficiency on multicultural education system by using various media contents that are consumed and produced by geographically distant places, compared to the traditional method of learning. Lastly, this study calls for the need of the change of curricular, development of learning materials, change of mindset, and last but not least, a necessity of more study for a sustainable globe.

Keywords:

*Media information literacy(MIL); media education; multicultural education; VR (Virtual Reality); action research; youth education; sustainability*

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

2015 European immigration crises accelerated the speed of globalization and desperate need of multicultural education. After the European immigration crises, several populist media and nationalist sites were launched in Finland such as MV Lehti. There was, is, and will be continuous migration between continents and between countries. Pull factor and push factor always coexist in every country. Those factors effect on people differently depending on their individual weighting on each factor. Still, some countries implicitly attract more immigrants than others. These factors can be political, cultural, historical, economic, or societal. In *figure 1* (from <https://gjabel.wordpress.com/2016/05/18/updated-circular-plots-for-directional-bilateral-migration-data/>), it shows that there are lots of moves within and outside each continent. These circular migration flow plots seem complicated, however, it visualizes the size of movements and allows us to understand the flow more easily. The flow plots show how big movements there were within Africa and within Western & Eastern Asia. To take a look at Europe, the major migration had happened by Europeans and Africans. In 2015, more than 1.8 million of migrants and refugees came to Europe. According to Eurostat, *figure 2* (from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911>), the average of EU asylum application was 260 per 100,000 local population.

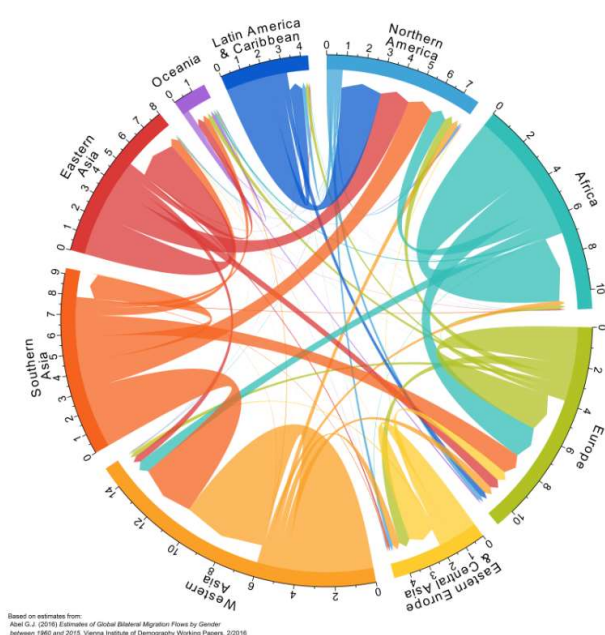
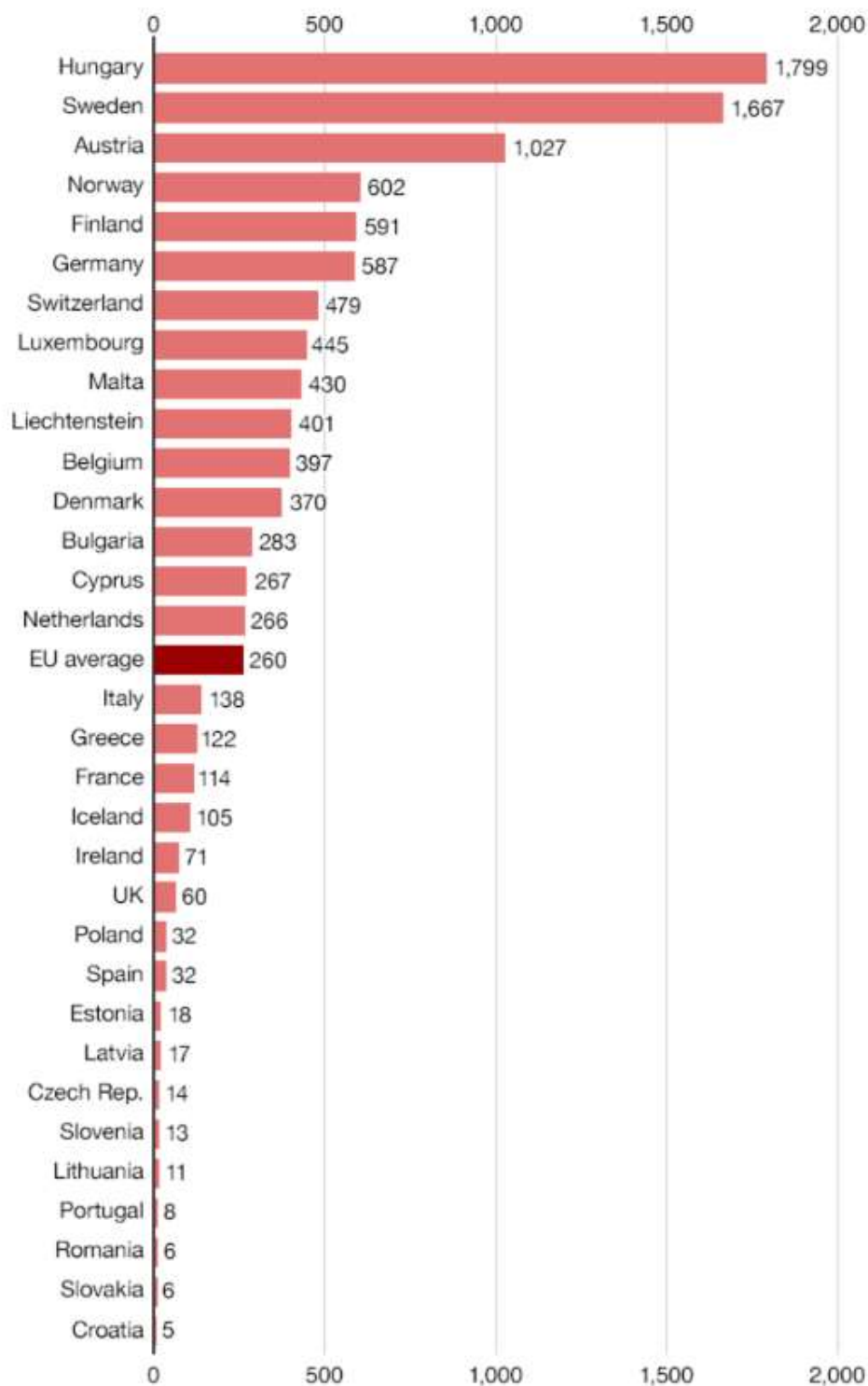


FIGURE 1. Circular Migration Flow Plots

**Asylum applications per 100,000 local population, 2015**



Source: Eurostat

BBC

**FIGURE 2. Asylum applications of Europe**

Putting aside humanitarian migrants mainly referring to refugees, there are other various types of migrations; Students migrants, labor migrants, seasonal migrants, trans-migrants, family-based migrants, undocumented migrants and more. As Cuban refers to Castles & Miller (2009) that globally tendency of low-wage economy and imbalance of wealth triggered an increase of labor migration since the 1990s, which resulted in forming transnational families (Cuban, 2014, p.740). Hamann, Zúñiga & García studied that for minority, there were limited or racialized categories when migrants searched for a job, which led the migrants to have rootlessness or mobility eventually (Hamann, Zúñiga & García, 2006, p.260). Smith and Guarnizo named such group '*Tansnationalism from below*' (in Hamann, Zúñiga & García, 2006, p. 259). This type of migrant group takes advantage of more than one nation-state to reduce the vulnerability of being a member of working class.

Migrants influence not only on the 'receiving' countries but also on 'sending' countries and on 'transit' countries for migration creates transnational circuits and social remittances. There are lots of discourses regarding such phenomenon and how these phenomenon effects on the mobile and the non-mobile people. Some say immigrants are only taking away benefits or even damaging 'receiving' countries. On the other hand, some say immigrants enrich and buffer the economic issues of 'receiving' countries. Through this study, I hope to find a way to reform the education system that will minimize conflicts and destructions caused by migration through integrating the immigrants, reducing cultural crash, and ultimately preventing any enormous migrations risking the existence of countries. Physical migration and globalization are the focal points of this study. However, there are studies bringing up how digital era is making digital spaces filled with digital migration and enhancing digital globalization. Before proceeding to the body part, it seems important to go through basic knowledge related to digital and media as the concepts contribute to this study considerably.

Prensky defines those born in or after the 1990's as *Digital Natives*, referring them as the native speakers of digital era (Prensky, 2001). Critics question the adequacy of defining this term mainly with generational differences. Critics have also argued that Prensky's term, *Digital Natives*, underestimate the variables of gender, education, experience, personal interest, engagement, and digital surroundings that can make *Digital Immigrants* fluent in technology than *Digital Natives* (Helsper and Eynon, 2010; Thomas, 2011). Nonetheless, despite the limits of these metaphors, these studies agree on the fact that new generation has an instant and intuitive sense or at least higher possibility of possessing that sense. *Digital Natives* less face the desideratum to put extra efforts into adapting themselves to high technology compared to *Digital Immigrants*. On one hand, the youth are lucky to be born within a convenient lifestyle and innate the talent of learning and knowing how to handle the digital tools. On the other hand, this information era pushes those who lack the media

literacy skill to the corner as media have become an integral part of them. According to Prensky, it is impossible for our traditional education system to handle the youth. The design of the traditional education system is unsuitable for the youth as their thinking patterns or brains transformed through the daily use of media. He emphasizes that we should try to communicate with the youth with their new language, using media (Prensky, 2001, p. 1-2).

The main purpose of media is to spread information for various reasons through various channels. The concept of media can be various tools or media types, including newspaper, magazines, books, television content, films, digital games, internet, and music and so on. Media production is no different from industrial production. Media production has evolved along the phase of industrialization change, from mass production for the general public to multi-kind and small-quantity production accommodating audiences' preferences, and furthermore, customizing the production for their viewers. Such evolvement was possible due to the development of digital social media. In such information era, where we have to face daily with personalized channels for communication, the importance of media literacy and media education is steeply increasing. To know how to conjugate media services, we need to develop our media literacy. Media literacy includes technological skills, knowledge in media, management capability, and self-protection ability from the risks that can be caused by media usage. There are several terms, such as media literacy, film literacy, information literacy, visual literacy, multi-literacy (Ofcom, 2014, p.21). However, in this study, the term media and information literacy (hereafter MIL) will be used as it covers overall concept of ability to read, understand, analyze, and to create media and as the term is preferred in the global environment of media education (Ruokamo, Kotilainen, Kupiainen & Maasilta, 2016, p.3). Media education's core is to develop media literacy, anyhow its aim is not only limited to media literacy. Ruokamo, Kotilainen, Kupiainen & Maasilta (2016) point out multimodality, social diversity, and competence in information and communication technology (ICT) are important elements for media education in curriculum level in basic education and in the Master's degree programs (Ruokamo, Kotilainen, Kupiainen & Maasilta, 2016, p.3).

As pointed out earlier, there is an urgent necessity to reform the education system caused by a huge number of immigrants in Europe. Here, I try to combine multicultural education and media education together to solve this issue, especially focusing on youth. This study is a type of action research carrying out an experimental teaching together with the youth. My personal interest in cultures, sub-cultures, and a sustainable society led me to conduct such research. On 1992 Jane Elliott, an American former school teacher, educator, and anti-racism activist, made a guest appearance on Oprah Winfrey show, an American talk show, and gave a speech about how 'All white people are racists'. Elliott emphasized in her speech that being white is a necessary condition, not sufficient

condition for being a racist, explaining that it is not just the white people, the westerners, nor only the wealthy ones who are racist or who discriminate others. In the same context, Sobre-Denton (2012) said that all human beings face a mixture of privilege and oppression. It just comes in a different level, timing, and situation. Sometimes we become the victims and sometimes we become the perpetrators of the oppression (Sobre-Denton, 2012, p.224). We all do, more or less. This kind of discrimination happens not only regarding the racial differences but also happens regarding cultural, ethnic, social, economic, national, ideological differences. Furthermore, there occurs discrimination even under the subdivision of same society, such as gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical and psychiatric ability, age, generation, and even language and hobby. Being an Asian, speaking Korean language, born in a middle-class family, I saw and discussed with both sides of being subject and object of discrimination. It gave me pain that some people are not able to understand the difference and even refuse to try to understand. A foreign, Asian, master degree student conducting cultural action research to the Finnish students was a unique trial and was hopefully appealing to all who participated in this study. At least the project was meaningful for me and it allowed me to take a small step forward making a better world.

The rest of the study is divided into 5 sections. Following this first section, literature review part covers about current media era and how the world is being globalized with, by, and through media. Next, it shows the importance of multicultural education and MIL. Further, it discusses what direction this study is heading using these two elements. The third section shares the theoretical background with details of the target group. Then, the study deals with the description of the method and data result. Lastly, the conclusion of the study suggests a proposal for future studies how we can further implement multicultural education into media education.



## 2. PUSHING BEYOND THE TRADITIONAL MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

As the research questions, which will be presented in the following chapter 3, deal with multicultural learning and perception transition through media education, in chapter 2 I try to give a brief description of the pivotal role of media education and multicultural education, share summaries of previous studies, and introduce the concepts that appear in this study. Here follows how media is embedded deeply in our life and how media can play an important role in the current stage of approaching multicultural society.

### 2.1. Digital media, solution for upcoming world issues

#### 2.1.1. The importance of exploiting media and information literacy (MIL) for youth

As previously explained in the start of chapter 2, media is embedded deeply in our daily life. Negroponte, a Greek-American architect and founder of MIT Media Lab, predicted and mentioned that almost every product and space will have digital systems in them (Negroponte, 1995). His foundation, OLPC (One Laptop per Child), made it as their mission to empower children by giving them laptops, which is used as a synonym of education for OLPC association. On OLPC's official homepage, they addressed that whatever world issue it is, the solution will include a digitalized form of education. Counting education as an emanation of social and cultural elements, media take up a great share in education (Frau-Meigs, 2012, p.17). I found my aim very similar to OLPC's mission. Through education, youth learn, share, create, and eventually connect to a sustainable future.

Before moving on to media effects and modern media trend, it is necessary to go over the continuous declarations and studies showing the importance of global media education. Bennett (1998) stated that upcoming education systems will include multimedia exercises, virtual reality simulations and will also take into account diversity, including personal interests and backgrounds (Bennett, 1998, p.12). Alvermann & Hagood (2000) pointed out the importance of developing critical media literacy. Especially focusing on how media contents can put youth into a position as a consumer within different social, cultural, and historical contexts (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000, p. 193). Kotilainen

(2010) also insisted on this, based on the facts that global publicities and cultural diversities have increased (Kotilainen, 2010, p. 65-74). Another significant research was done by Edlund, Edlund & Haugen (2014). They highlight the salient importance of vernacular literacy in daily practices. They claim the importance of vernacular literacy has increased more due to flourishing of social media (Edlund, Edlund & Haugen, 2014).

As addressed in the studies above, the importance of media education is continuously being emphasized especially under globalization and digitalization. Nowadays there are numerous media with variety, including the social networks (ex. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube), the game-based learning platforms (ex. Kahoot, Quizlet, Quizizz, Socrative), the learning management systems (ex. Blackboard, Moodle, Canvas), MOOC (Massive Open Online Course), the online virtual worlds (ex. Second life, There, InWorldz), and so much more like PowToon and Pinterest, which mediate our personal lives. Such flood of media has its merits and demerits. However, as daily media usage is a general tendency, it is hard to deviate from using media. Nonetheless, media is a tunnel for youth to express their opinion and enhance the discussions among themselves. Especially for the students with low communication skills in written words or spoken languages, using photos, video, or graphics will allow them to express themselves better than using only text.



FIGURE 3. **1:1 tablet teaching**

Even though media include print media, image media, and electronic media in whole, evidently digital media have been expanding its territory. Nowadays, there is even a phrase saying “learning is just under your fingertips”. To some, it might still sound like a mirage. Anyhow our technology, itself, is advanced enough to provide service such as 1:1 tablet teaching as represented in *figure 3* (from

<http://www.apple.com/education/preview/>). Teachers can have a constant connection with their students, and distribute contents according to students' ages and their learning stages. This type of 1:1 media distribution will obviously help students to exchange thoughts, interact, easily access to online information, and also help them to develop their MIL skills. All the more, 1:1 media distribution offers new opportunities to the youth including the marginalized students. Not only for the students but such progress of technology also allows teachers to access various types of tools and teaching materials. It is a long way to make 1:1 tablet teaching part of our daily education. Yet, it will soon be possible.

Despite the fact 1:1 tablet teaching is yet to come, modern media usage is more leaned towards private and personalized usage, focusing on personalized motivation and needs, compared to the past massive media usage. Regarding the effect of media on people, there are discourses and various theories. Media theory can be classified into three big categories; direct effect theories (ex. silver bullets, hypodermic needles, spiral of silence), personal selectivity and perception theories (ex. Carl Hovland's sleeper's effect, two-step flow), and theories claiming media effects on the audience with long-term usage (ex. cultivation, agenda setting) (Smith, 2004). Whatever function and effect media actually has, using media is unavoidable. Therefore, it is more important to know how to utilize the media in a better way. Nowadays the audience became anonymous and fragmented, personalizing and customizing their own platform of use. Especially *Digital Natives* (Prensky, 2001) are capable of creating and distributing media contents by themselves. This combination turned the focus to how the audience influences media. Uses and gratifications theory is the most audience-oriented approach and helps to examine the angle of how audience's needs lead their media choices and eventually influence on shaping media. According to Ellis (2000), we are in the era of media boom and able to enjoy a tremendous amount of media content. The production volume of media is so big that it is almost impossible for the consumer to chase up the speed. Only through media, we are allowed to switch our economic role from consumer to producer with ease (Frau-Meigs, 2012, p.15). Media consumers at the same time being media producers (so-called prosumers), the steepness of media production volume will not easily flat off. MIL is emerging as one of the important competencies in time of deluge of prosumers and media contents.

### 2.1.2. Deficiency of multicultural aspect in the Finnish curriculum

Well-known country for their solid but pliable education system, Finland was strong with PISA results for some period of time. Especially in PISA 2000 and PISA 2006, the Finnish students were said to be the best in terms of reading, mathematical and scientific literacy. The variations in students

and school performance were noted to be the minimum among countries participating in PISA test (Simola, 2005, p. 456). These results show how the Finnish education system put effort into forming inclusive education (Halinen and Järvinen, 2008, p.78). Leaving out the ranking of PISA, in which Finland is fluctuating a bit in the range of upper rank, following what I heard and experienced, the Finnish Education is unique, creative, and liberal in various aspects. Moreover, Finland's media education exceeds advanced level. Following the survey which was carried out in 2014, targeting the age range of 16-89, Eighty-six percent of the Finnish population use the internet. Following this statistic, Finland is considered to be a high-tech nation (Savolainen and Zilliacus-Tikkanen, 2015, p.21). According to the National Audiovisual Institute, KAVI (Kansallinen Audio Visuaalinen Instituutti), media education in Finland showed sign of sprouting in the 1950s and the systemic feature began to form around the 1970s. In the 1990s, as media began to be used more individually, the importance of media and information technology grew in educational institutions. Finland is one of the pioneering countries for promoting media literacy to youth in national level. Finland supports many media institutes and events such as Media Literacy School, Media Literacy Week, and National Audiovisual Institute (so-called MEKU) in order to promote and cultivate media education and audiovisual media (KAVI, 2016).

Following to KAVI, MIL is an ability that should be initiated from an early age. Finland puts a huge interest in such media education and links this to enhancing civic competence. In Finland, MIL is not only restricted to education division but is also emphasized by *Ministry of Justice* and *The Finnish Competition and Consumer Agency* (KAVI Institute, 2016). According to the description, MIL is sorted as democratic education and consumer education. Furthermore, movements to enhance MIL are included in several policies such as Finland's Digital Agenda 2011-2020, Policies for Audiovisual Culture, Public Library Policy 2015, and Child and Youth Policy Programme 2012-2015 (KAVI Institute, 2016). This articulates the fact Finland puts salient importance to MIL, acknowledging that other countries rarely contain authority in governmental level for media education. This research and the Finnish educational target tally with each other. Starting from enhancing students' MIL level, in both interpreting and producing media contents, students can learn ICT skills following their curricula in a creative way.

Finnish education system also realizes the importance of cultural aspects. According to Jokikokko (2010), the Finnish Ministry of Education pursues the higher education institutions to support multicultural higher education community and civil society. Furthermore, the higher education institutions are demanded to develop students' capability of functioning in a global environment and their understanding of how their actions effect globally. Additionally, Finnish Ministry of Education

put a spotlight on the fact that it is not only students but also teachers who must strengthen their multicultural competencies (Jokikokko, 2010, p. 15).

In contrast to Finnish government ministries and national institutes showing much interest in media education, digital technology, and multicultural aspects, there are not enough specialized courses in schools. Though, Finnish national core curriculum for basic education 2014 records to achieve transversal competence, such as cultural competence, interaction and self-expression (T2), multiliteracy (T4), and ICT competence (T5) (Finnish national board of education, 2016, p. 21-24), it seemed there was no distributed lesson hours to teach competences as a specialized course ([http://www.oph.fi/download/179422\\_distribution\\_of\\_lesson\\_hours\\_in\\_basic\\_education\\_2012.pdf](http://www.oph.fi/download/179422_distribution_of_lesson_hours_in_basic_education_2012.pdf)). Unlike the basic education curriculum guide, Finnish national core curriculum for preparatory education for general upper secondary education 2014 had a course named ‘World literature and cultural diversity (LVS7)’. However, as also mentioned in the guide, preparatory education for general upper secondary education is aimed at immigrants and foreign-language speakers (Finnish national board of education, 2014, p.5). Another somewhat course I found for mainstream students was from Finnish national core curriculum for upper secondary schools 2003. This one was a compulsory course named ‘A common world (GE2)’. The details of ‘A common world (GE2)’ course will be discussed in chapter 3 as this course was the sample model of the carried out project. As I was not able to scrutinize the latest curriculums, mainly because there is no English version, I cannot assure if there isn’t any specialized curriculum or courses to handle media education, digital technology, and multicultural aspects up to now. Anyhow, from what I know, it seems Finnish curriculum tries to melt these elements into other courses but has no specialized courses for the mainstream students.

Finland was not so much a multicultural country compared to many other European countries. However, within the last 20 years, the necessity to manage diverse immigration has risen, especially with the 2015 global refugee crisis. This movement affected Finland’s education funding system in a way of decreasing the government’s funding and lowering percentage of the states’ coverage compared to the municipalities’ coverage. Along with increasing number of immigrants, racism and revulsion towards immigrants are bulging. Such exigency illuminates the need for embracement of diversity and multiculturalism. Sinkkonen and Kyttälä (2014) point out that both Finnish society and the Finnish education system have a long way to go to reach the true multicultural stage. If Finland’s education is to create educational structure preventing exclusion, it is important to develop activities and pedagogies to accelerate Finland towards a multicultural society.

Thus far, by combining multicultural aspects into MIL education, I hope this project can develop participants’ media literacy of creating, interpreting, computing, and researching, in addition to

information literacy of reading and writing. Hoping this project will allow the participants to learn an innovative and a unique way of expressing themselves and improve creativity regarding cultural aspects. Culture is something one cannot learn from rote memorization. However, with visual learning and creation, it can promote deeper learning by letting students engage. Even though it might be not worth the first-hand experience, in this way, students can have a glimpse of learning how to develop competencies to live in the multicultural era and how to respect diversity.

## 2.2. Origins of culture and multicultural stages

### 2.2.1. What is culture

The following part of this study moves on to describe in greater detail what culture is. Concept or definition of culture is not singular and complex, which makes it unequivocal to use one theory. Here, I share several perspectives and theories from various fields of studies related to culture. The fields of studies that I am referring to are cultural studies, educational studies, media and communication studies, and psychological studies. The main reason for carrying out such broad research is that culture itself is a broad concept which is melted in every part of our life. However, in this study, I mainly focus on cultural studies and educational studies particularly dealing with multicultural and intercultural competencies. Hofstede, known as a pioneer of researching cross-cultural groups and organizations referred culture as “collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category from others”. Hofstede’s claim was that each cultural group strongly influence the social and organizational behaviors (Hofstede, 1984, p.13). Bennett made an additional remark on Hofstede’s opinion that culture is not a fixed status but rather a continuous circulation. Bennett claimed that through “internalize” and “externalize” process between culture and individuals, culture can circulate between “objective” and “subjective” culture. Based on this idea, Bennett stated that when individuals face a cultural difference they go through Bennett’s developmental model regarding intercultural sensitivity. The steps are denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration of the difference (Bennett, 1993).

Proceeded more from previous studies, Kim defines culture as, “pattern of knowledge, attitudes, values, mindsets, perceptions, and behaviors that permeate all life activities” melted in the members (Kim, 2000). With detailed perspective, Rathje brought up a model that culture is not “monolithic” but rather “multi-collective” concept (Rathje, 2009). Rathje emphasized the importance of considering the context or the similarity occurred between cultures. She claimed that we should avoid dealing with ‘culture’ as a whole but rather slice the concept into small little groups. These small

groups of collective membership or cultural customs are available to add or omit if required (Rathje, 2009, pp. 35-58). Through her claim, we can seek that making a stereotype about one's culture is dangerous and useless because things can change in small dimensions. This means there can be more similarity between two or more cultures and it is not impossible to live along together in harmony. Rathje claims that traditional intercultural educations were focused on the explanation of cultural differences towards 'primary' cultures and on the conflicts of two cultures crashing. Slight difference of viewpoint can wield influence on the difficulty level of reaching the multicultural society. Banks (2010) defines culture as a concept of sharing values, symbols, interpretations, and perspectives. He states that interpreting symbols or happenings follow the similar pattern within those who came from the same cultural background (Banks, 2010). However, following to Rathje's theory (2015), even the people from the same culture behaves differently depending on their collective groups and context. In conclusion, intercultural is not a concept only between countries and continents but also can be applied to individuals and the subcultures they possess (Rathje, 2015). This encourages us to have a hope that fully multicultural society is not an impossible dream. The concept of culture will evolve continuously. Still, to seek a sustainable development under such multicultural and transnational era which we are heading towards, Rathje's definition seems to be tractable.

As much as the definition of culture, the definition of *Intercultural* and *Transcultural* differ from the field of study and researchers. For example, Frau-Meigs (2013) defines intercultural as the relationships between cultures as nations. Anyhow, there are other researchers who claim that the definition of intercultural should be leaning towards interpersonal interactions which are distant concept apart from nations or media. One of the intercultural learning organizations in the United States (<https://www.springinstitute.org/whats-difference-multicultural-intercultural-cross-cultural-communication/>) states that term intercultural contains a deeper cultural understanding including reciprocal changes and effects between cultures. Jokikokko (2010), while defining intercultural education, also claims the term can be either more towards individual cultural encounters or more towards challenges of globalization through theories and models of education. Having discussed how *Intercultural* is defined, I will now move on to briefly discuss how *Transcultural* is defined. Even though Frau-Meigs (2013) defined transcultural as user's relationship with media regarding culture, due to unclearness of the definition between studies and due to the fact this study is closer to the concept of reaching the stage of multiculturalism, the term transcultural was also not selected to be used in this study. Moreover, there are not much of debatable differences in these three concepts as each concept supplements each other. Guilherme and Dietz (2015) claim that these three concepts; *Multicultural*, *Intercultural*, *Transcultural*, are "simultaneously ideologically loaded and culturally slippery" (Guilherme and Dietz, 2015, p.11). Furthermore, under definitions which UNESCO

provides, interculturality presupposes multiculturalism, and intercultural education also presupposes multicultural education (Unesco, 2006, p.17-18). Based on these reasons, this study will mainly use the concept of multicultural.

According to Jokikokko's study (2010), cultural education is a sub-concept of global education, which broadly includes areas of peace education, inclusive education, eco-justice education, multicultural education, media education and so on. He claims such concepts are overlapping and having vague boundaries so that it is not necessary to separate the concepts strictly (Jokikokko, 2010, p. 19-20). In this study, I will mainly use the term *Multicultural* even though also *Intercultural and Transcultural* are usable terms because *Multicultural* is an optimal choice for this study. First, this term clearly shows the concept of harmonizing several cultures and ethnic groups. Second, this study leans towards evolvement of the curriculum rather than interpersonal or individual cultural exchange. Third, this type of culture oriented media education is not aiming for a single race or a single nationality, but rather aiming for various types of immigrants with multiple cultural backgrounds. Fourth, unlike definitions of *Intercultural and Transcultural*, *Multicultural* does not distinguish host or visitor. The term *Multicultural* puts every culture at the equal value to be respected, which is an extension of preventing cultures to be diminished or merged into the so-called mainstream or host culture. Fifth, this term does not limit who or what can be positioned as the subject of any cultural exchange. The subject of a cultural transfer can be nations, culture, media, or even individuals. The term *Multicultural* seems to be fitting in all these criteria. Still, in this study, we will use the term *Intercultural and Transcultural* when they are more appropriate to be used. Additionally, in this study, *Multicultural education* will be including education on social justice, human rights, power distance issues between countries and cultures, and situation of unequal structures.

### 2.2.2. Expedite the Multicultural Stage with multicultural education

Having defined what culture means and what terminology we will use for this study, now I will move on to describe the destination stage and suggest how to reach this goal. Following to Jackson and Holvino (1986), Multicultural Organizational Development (MCOD) has 6 level of stages (*Figure 4*): a) Exclusionary, b) White Male Club, c) Equal Opportunity Compliance, d) Affirmative Action, e) Redefining, and f) Multicultural. I won't go into details with each stage. Anyhow, MCOD shows how gradually we grow towards inclusion. Exclusionary stage of membership, theoretically and practically, includes those who are Anglo Saxon white men, native English speaking, wealthy, heterosexual, and without any disability. This might sound absurd to some people, however, this certain stage of organizations still exist in some part of our societies. Despite the fact that Jackson



and Holvino's MCOD model was formed in 1986, we seem distant to reach the multicultural stage of their model. There always has been huge struggles and resistances to make a step from one stage to the other. Still, it was and is worth to achieve. Apparently, to head towards the multicultural stage we need sustainable development, embracement of diversity, and protection of human rights of all kinds.

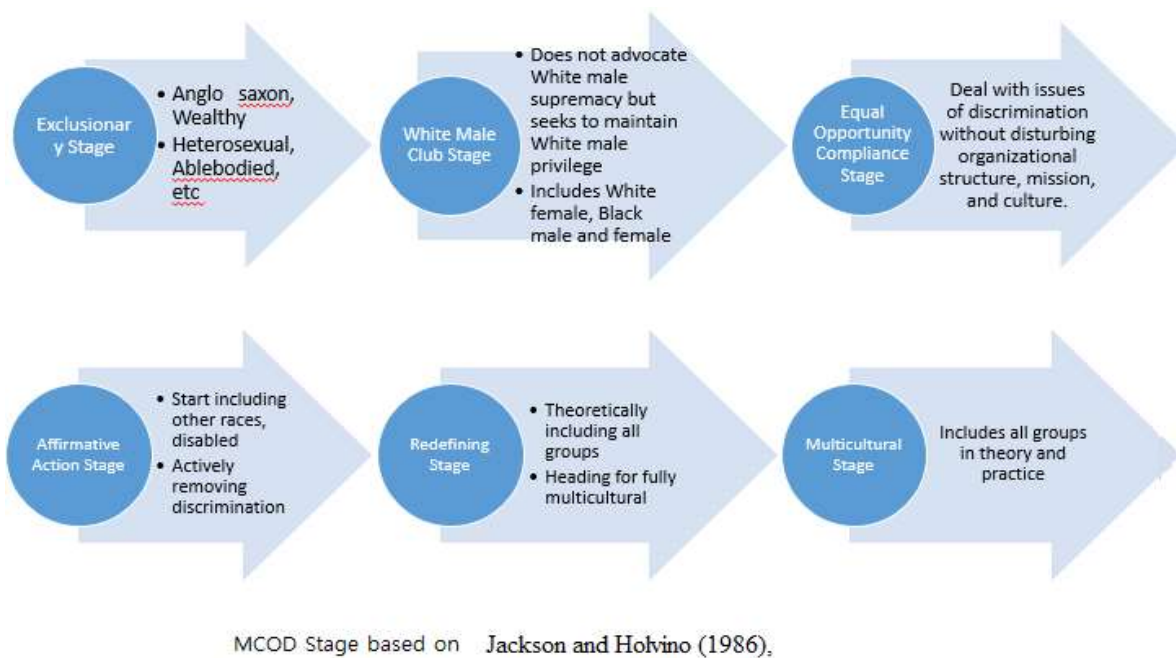


FIGURE 4. Multicultural Organizational Development Stages

Having experience of facing cultural differences is important to go to the multicultural stage as it develops intercultural competencies. Intercultural competencies are easier to develop with direct experiences, such as living abroad, sharing space with others other than family members, and so on. On the other hand, indirect experiences, such as learning other languages, having a role model who is intercultural, watching foreign movies and listening to foreign music, and discussing cultural diversity can also help developing intercultural competencies. The effect differs from people to people, and from the types of experiences they had.

However, such direct or indirect experiences can be inaccessible. Here, I claim combining media and education together with cultural contents can help youth to develop and improve their intercultural competencies. A considerable amount of studies show how education, media, and culture play important role in developing competencies for achieving the multicultural stage. The

three elements can be separated or blended with each other element. Clark (2003), who used the MCODE model in his study, states that we can achieve the multicultural stage by performing multicultural education. Grant et al. (1977) state that multicultural education followed by curricular, instructional, administrative, and environmental elements can help to preserve the integrity of individuals and are imperative for quality education (Grant et al., 1977, p. 290). Verma, Kalekin & Pitkänen (2012) also stated that schooling and education are the main key factors for integration of family immigrants. Let us now see how media can play its role through previous studies. Waters & Brook (2010), Mol (2013), and Baláz & Williams (2004) did research on international students' migration, international students' experiences before and after the study migration, and how media effects on their choice of country. Including their research, several types of research proved that media is used as a powerful mediator, supporting the social remittance to happen more efficiently between transnational parenthood and families (Cuban, 2014, p. 738; Tse & Waters, 2013, p. 542). Especially Baláz & Williams (2004) shows media plays important role in giving certain impressions about other countries.

This study aims to give inspiration for future researchers how media education can become a core method for achieving cultural diversity. As aforementioned, as direct or indirect experiences to develop intercultural competencies can be inaccessible for some youth, combining the three elements into the curricular can be our solution. Kim's model of Stress-Adaptation-Growth Dynamics can be applied to know the blending of the three elements. Through cultural media content, the audience can indirectly feel the 'cultural shock'. According to Kim's model, the audience goes through stress accompanied by acculturation and deculturation process and eventually adapt themselves (Kim, 2000, p. 296).

## 2.3. The emergence of multicultural education

### 2.3.1. The need of multicultural education

Having discussed in the previous section what culture and the multicultural stage are, this section will be discussing the reasons why and how to reach the multicultural stage through multicultural education built on the values we discuss below. Understanding and preserving other culture is another important aspect of reaching the multicultural stage. Intercultural connections are rapidly growing and the bigger number of people is experiencing multicultural situations. Nowadays it is not easy to distinguish home country, nationality, mother-language, or concept of home. Some people happen to face confusion defining their own cultural identity when they experience more than

singular culture. This kind of experiences are not only limited to reality but easily expanded through cyber or virtual space through the internet. Kim states that through the internet, youth connect to various spots and people, which involves in their identity development (Kim, 2016, p.200). According to Berry (2014), cultural identity has a basis in the concept of social identity but consists more of symbolic and behavioral parts. Cultural identity is a sense of belonging based on nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, religion, and other subcultures (Berry, 2014, p. 8). Such cultural identity confusion even makes people question their home country. Iyer claims that the concept of home defines outside physical materials. It is not about where our ancestry originates from, where we are born or educated, where we pay our taxes, where our inter-personal network locates, or where do we want to spend most of our time. Iyer says home is where you become yourself (Iyer, 2013). Knowing your culture and your belongings can lead to cultural identity consolidation. If youth faces lack of cultural heritage while their growth, that person's potential can get swerved, damaged or even vanish, which can effect on one's identity (Grant et al., 1977, p.289).

People who happen to face intercultural experiences happen to develop their intercultural competency to understand diversity and to consolidate their identity. On the other hand, those who never experience other culture have a high possibility of ending up with either none or low intercultural competency. Due to such fact, Jokikokko (2010, p.42) claims that Nieto (1996) argued it is mainstream students who have to be educated regarding multicultural, for those are the one who lacks the diverse perspective to understand others. This was also supported by other previous studies. Evanoff (2006) points out that integrating and adapting culture depends on people of the dominant culture. To understand others and oneself, learning a proper way to understand the cultural difference is a crucial thing. Through the process of understanding, we will be able to seek a way to remove value-hierarchical thinking. As much as sharing and understanding the cultural difference is important, preserving and supporting cultural diversity is our ethical responsibility. Cultural diversity can be sought through cultural pluralism. Cultural pluralism is an idea of recognizing the value of each and every culture, putting all together in a harmony without leaving any group behind. It does not mean that each culture has to be fully equalized but rather having overlaps and accommodating with each other (Grant et al., 1977; Verma, Kalekin & Pitkänen, 2012). While I was having the thought of linking cultural pluralism to multicultural education, following phrase from an article of Association for Supervision Curriculum Development (ASCD) Multicultural Education Commission was totally intriguing.

*In educational terms, the recognition of cultural pluralism has been labeled "Multicultural education". The essential goals of multicultural education embrace: (a) recognizing and prizing diversity; (b) developing a greater understanding of other cultural patterns; (c) respecting individuals of all cultures; and (d) developing positive and productive interaction among people and among experiences of diverse cultural groups. (Grant et al., 1977, p.290)*

Martusewicz and Edmundson (2005) mention that current globalizing process has the defect of decreasing biological, linguistic, and cultural diversity, which is a huge loss. They claim such diversity should be preserved (Martusewicz and Edmundson, 2005, p.1-3). Globalization is not a negative phenomenon. However, idolizing or prioritizing western cultures and singularizing cultures can be problematic. Multicultural education should not only help people accept the differences but also assist them to recognize the right of the differences to exist. Martusewicz, Edmundson, and Lupinacci (2015) argue that language, culture, and the way of thinking are the power to sustain cultures. They claim such difference forms the richness of the globe. Moreover, the teacher's role is very important in maintaining such diversity as the teachers have to understand this relationship and pass the values on to the students. The teachers should be considerate with vocabularies which contain "value hierarchy", especially those we use often in daily life without being aware (Martusewicz, Edmundson, and Lupinacci, 2015, p. 128-131). To eliminate "value-hierarchical thinking", "value dualism" and "logic of domination", terms from Warren (1990), teachers should try to understand various cultural backgrounds and should contemplate using appropriate words, which is less biased. In addition to teacher's role, students should develop intercultural competence. Even if one never traveled outside his or her mother country, it is impossible to escape facing the reality of the globalized world with diversity. Both teachers and education play the key roles in helping the next generation develop such competency (Jokikokko, 2010, p. 13). Multicultural education built on above idea will help reducing prejudice, reorganizing the school system to embrace all types of youth, and understanding the need to provide more equity to those out the boundary to so-called mainstream students.

### 2.3.2. Embedding informal learning within school curricular

Where do we usually learn about culture? Previously we learned about the culture inside the social group we are encompassed. Such social group can be family, friend, society, community and so on. One of the most influential social groups will be the school. The importance of knowing and understanding different cultures are growing in the globalized era. As it is an important element, indeed experts who know well about both culture and education should teach such important

competency. Those who are experts about learning environment and curating can make multicultural education more effectively. On the other hand, Kim (2016) suggests that research regarding multicultural learning should be moved out of the schools, which represent formal and local settings, as youth interact with online platforms, which are more informal and nonlocal settings irrelevant to printed contents. Even though I share Kim's (2016) opinion about informal, nonlocal, transcultural digital literacies having a connection to understanding multicultural and global learning (Kim, 2016, p.199), I argue that the school can make a link between and curate the formal and the informal learning environments. Additionally, the school should set up a curricular aiming to help youth explore more outside of the school.

Nieto (2009) worries about how multicultural education happens outside the policies or practices of the school system, which does not demand multicultural education to take into its consideration of societal structure point of view. People tend to belittle multicultural education as if the content only covers food, dress, and the traditional holidays of foreign countries, which is not true (Nieto, 2009, p. 38). There are several studies done to show that school curriculum necessitates multicultural education. School and education system cannot fully solve inequality happening at home or community. However, school and its education system mediate such economic, political and cultural inequalities in an indirect way. Such mediation eventually enlightens people who will lead the community to the more equalized stage (Tikly, 2011, 16).

Hamann, Zúñiga & García mentioned that schools are “mediating institutions” where multi-level; individual & community, can be “enacted, contested, and endowed” multi-dimensionally with even macro-scale issues (Hamann, Zúñiga & García, 2006, p.260). Chimombo refers to Fuller and Clarke's (1994) findings that under some conditions, the schools effect greater than family in deficiency settings (Chimombo, 2005, p. 139). This shows how important school education can be. Moreover, Ainley (1993) sorts skills, especially vocational skills, to be a part of a culture. Quoting Washburn (1978), Ainley claims that skills are the property of groups and those skills transmit not by gene but by learning (Ainley, 1993). Education is a reflection of society itself, therefore, things that require preservation and shaping in future should be included in education (Ainley, 1993). Though Ainley's (1993) statement is limited to the vocational and purely technological skills, considering that media is part of technology and cultural competence being part of a culture, it allows us to extend the interpretation. Therefore, both media literacy and cultural competence should be included in education, especially within the school curriculum.

Having discussed why multicultural education should be nested in the school curriculum, let us now consider what kind of components we should put a priority on when we think of embedding multicultural education into school curriculum. Land, Hannafin & Oliver (2012) argue that the

improvement of technology brought up a new demand for design change of learning environment (Land, Hannafin & Oliver, 2012, p.3). It is true that development of technology made it available to have more interaction in the classroom as well as allowing youth to have blended and flipped learning environment. However, with such evolvement and rapid usage of technology, people start to put technology before knowledge itself (Fullan, 2011, p.15). In 2010 OECD report (2010), there was a concern about technology being in the ‘driver’s seat’ while pedagogy staying in ‘passenger seat’, implying it to be the reason education is heading the wrong direction. This is a very interesting point of perspective for media education.

McDougall and Potter (2015) emphasize the importance of technology implement but at the same time, they point out such media learning environment neglects pedagogical focus. Their solution for this is to reboot the curation (McDougall and Potter, 2015). Through curation, teachers can categorize and distribute qualified contents among over flooding information. Curating can link formal and informal learning environments, which will bolster proper media education environment (McDougall and Potter, 2015). Still, their study lacks to explain the detailed difference between informal and non-formal learning. Non-formal learning is more about general knowledge offered by official institutions while informal learning is general interest that is more personal and motivational. According to McDougall and Potter (2015), curating is not just editing but connecting and organizing the active use of media. Yet, curating is one of the many ways to improve the quality of learning. Sasha and Duffy (2012, p.37) cite from Clift, Houston, & Pugach (1990) that reflective process doing “active, rigorous, and analytic process” is the main element for improving the quality of learning. If things move in the right direction, improving quality of education will accomplish both approaches towards economic and social justice. As Hanushek and Wößmann (in Tikly, 2011, p.5) argue the quality of education has much more effect on economic growth compared to the years spent in school, meaning quality means more than the quantity of education (Hanushek and Wößmann, 2008 cited in Tikly, 2011, p.5).

Media and cultural tied studies are done before such as cultural comparisons among the audiences’ interpretations. Needless to say, there are also studies integrating multiculturalism in media literacy and proves such interactions with media can impose cross-cultural understanding and successful way of propagating knowledge or ideology (Schwab, 2016). It is bluntly mentioned in Grant et al.’s (1977) study that multicultural education and MIL are highly connected. “Perceptual, analytical, and application skills” from MIL will help to take a big leap towards cross-cultural interaction. Besides, aforementioned skills are highly required for multicultural, multinational, multiracial, and highly technological society (Grant et al., 1977, p. 290).

Banks (1998) also studied on multicultural using media and mentioned, “Vicarious experiences” from multimodal media, including video, games, photos, and literature, can make positive changes on students’ racial attitudes. He even mentioned such “Vicarious experiences” can be more powerful than direct experiences. Youth’s usage of multimodal media is obvious and also has been studied by many researchers. Rideout, V. J., Foehr, U. G., & Roberts, D. F. (2010) claim students get information by viewing multimodal online media, made of different modes such as words, visuals, and sound. Furthermore, Mills (2010) says there are certainly demanding calls for multimodal literacies in instruction and assessments of education.

According to Yildiz (2014), the definition of media literacy has expanded, due to the globalization and the increase of population. Now the meaning of media literacy includes global competencies of multilingual, multicultural, and multimedia. Yildiz emphasized by quoting from Grizzle et al. (2013) that global media literacy education is not only important for students but also educators for lessening inequalities, misunderstanding, and ‘soft conflicts’ (Yildiz, 2014). Ruokamo, Kotilainen, Kupiainen & Maasilta (2016) seem to show the similar opinion to Yildiz (2014) on the expanded meaning of media literacy. They claim that in global media education framework, studies started to focus on the agendas which relate to a culturally diverse world (Ruokamo, Kotilainen, Kupiainen & Maasilta, 2016, p.4).

Even though Finland has quite a multi-cultural background, not so many research based on cultural studies happened. Still, there were some and more studies are happening. One of the action research projects taking participants’ life narratives was *‘Expressive artistic activities and self-understanding of children from immigrant and adverse social background’* (Syreeni 2001-2003). Also, Skhiri (2016) carried out her study focused on multicultural education contributed and promoted by immigrant teachers. Skhiri (2016) claimed that she could not find any similar action research done in Finland. Whereas there was an opinion that most of the studies are done in the Finnish language so that it is hard for foreigners to know about such research history. That is why there is a need to have more studies done in English, like the study here. The next subsection describes more about how my research tries to cover integrating multicultural education into media literacy information for mainstream youth.

### 2.3.3. Research questions

So far the content has focused on defining the concepts, getting a grasp on reality, commenting on relevant literature and studies. The followings will focus on providing a description of this study. As aforementioned, there are not many existing studies done in English in Finland and we evidently

need more studies done in English for this field of study. In order to integrate multicultural education into media literacy information for mainstream youth, I tried to analyze which specific parts I should look into.

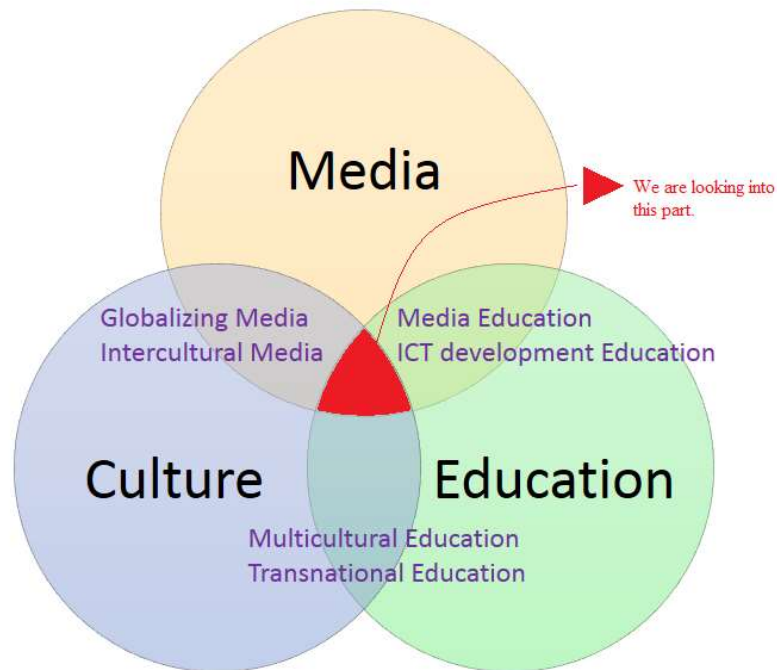


FIGURE 5. **Triangle zone of this study**

As this research is a combined study of Education, Media, and Culture, the study is unable to cover in-depth analysis of each field but would preferably sweep through the previous researches done regarding each field. There were numerous studies in each field and in the intersection of two or three fields (the red triangle of *Figure 5*). This study assumes that media has a strong effect on the audience under continuous exposure. Under this assumption, a hypothesis was formed that distributing multicultural perspective through media and teaching media literacy to youth will make a positive change in their point of view when it comes to the diversity of life and culture. In addition to aforementioned, other aims of this project are to promote MIL, to develop skills of expression through media tools, to contribute forming creative learning environment, and to critically evaluate this project for future studies. Following the flow of contents till now, these are my final research questions regarding the study.



► Participants' understanding related to learning

R1. How youths' understanding of media contents support multicultural learning?

► Development of cultural identity related to learning

R2. How youths' media literacies skills related to their understanding of media contents support individual identity development?

# 3. RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION

## 3.1. Participants

The project participants were from the upper secondary school of southern Finland. This municipality is the most populous inland city in the Nordic countries. The participants are 1<sup>st</sup>-year students (mostly 16years old). Altogether, 8 students participated in the project consisting 5 females and 3 males. The research starts from collecting participants' previous cultural experience, heads towards how they react to the activities in the project, and ends focusing on the outcomes of their feedback and media creation. All of the participants were voluntary based. Some students joined the project as a pre-step of geography course for next year, and some joined out of interest in culture, while others joined out of interest in VR (Virtual reality).

This research aimed at mainstream youth being inspired by Jokikokko's study. Jokikokko's study (2010) says that mainstream students should be the main target of multi-cultural education as they are the ones who never had a chance to see things in different cultural perspectives. Also adding to this, I think if mainstream students embrace other cultures, there will be less occurrence of 'soft conflicts'. Jokikokko also claimed the schools should form a safe and equal learning environment respecting the identity and culture of all students (Jokikokko, 2010, p. 27, 42), which this study is also trying to achieve.

### 3.1.1. Why an upper secondary school of Finland?

The upper secondary school (hereafter T Lukio), is half government funded teacher training school and has been nominated as UNESCO school since 1984. Located in one of the main cities known for the economic and cultural hub, T Lukio, pursues global education to promote understanding various cultures, together with other factors, such as economic, social, and geographic, which influence on forming cultures (*Refer to below quotation*). As T Lukio being a trainee school, it focuses on the development of teaching and has a supportive and motivating learning environment. One of T Lukio's structure supporting this is having a good setup of allowing student teachers to applicate their theoretical knowledge into practice.

*Teaching endeavors to acknowledge global citizenship and sustainable development in all of the different age groups. The purpose of global education is to promote understanding between cultures and growth as a global citizen. Our goal is to help students conceive the world's various cultures as a fortune. Students learn about the manners of different cultures as well as the economic, social and geographic factors as forces that enrich, impoverish or build cultures. (Retrieved from T Lukio Homepage)*

In 2016 World Economic Forum (<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-what-it-means-and-how-to-respond/>), the term ‘The fourth industrial revolution’ was referred. According to Schwab (2016), billions of people being connected with easier access to unlimited knowledge is the main point of this revolution. He mentioned AI (artificial intelligence), IoT (the Internet of Things), 3D printing, quantum computing and other emerging technologies will empower this revolution. Additionally, he points out the most beneficial party of this revolution is consumers, saying that it allowed them to afford and access the digital world (Schwab, 2016). Being a part of the fourth revolution era, media education is more than just about technology. Media education has to turn its focus towards the human essentials, a way of thinking, human network, and changing the value of the society. Moreover, the teaching should not be limited to textbooks but use more various materials and methods to help students become autonomous, creative, and collaborative for the future.

T Lukio in Finland can be seen as both purposive and convenience sampling, as I am studying in Finland and doing an internship in that specific school allowed me to have easier access to the students and teachers. Nonetheless, T Lukio was a suitable target to conduct this research meeting my aim and the conditions of this study. I was only able to conduct this project thanks to supervisors’ supports and T Lukio trying to orient equality, cultural diversity, community, safety, tolerance, and fairness. The preliminary plan of this project was to have a cultural comparative study of Korea, Finland, and India. Distributing media contents and allowing youth to have direct social media contact with one another seemed like a captivating idea. If it was carried out, it would have given similarly aged youth chance to share their culture with their own perspective. Unfortunately, I realized it will be an excessive plan simply for master degree. In the end, the project was down-sized to conduct experiment only in Finland.

### 3.1.2. Ethical issues

As an ethical issue is one of the critical criteria in Finland, especially for youth, I collected consent letters from the participants for collecting data. Additionally, participants’ names were replaced in

pseudonyms to protect their privacy. The pseudonyms do not correspond to participants' actual name to avoid connection. The participants had their right to turn down questions or tasks they feel uncomfortable with and to drop off from the project whenever they wish to protect their right. Students were reassured that the project will be only used for research purpose anonymously. To protect the freedom of expression, 2 lecturing sessions were delivered in one of the classrooms they use regularly and those who entered classroom either as observer or participant was pre-approved from the supervising teacher. This was a way to form a safe environment for students.

## 3.2. The research method used in the study

### 3.2.1. Participatory Action Research

The project was conducted in the framework of Participatory action research (PAR), which is a type of qualitative data collection. Qualitative data can be categorized into five different methodologies: “biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study.” (Creswell, 1998 cited in Polkinghorne, 2005, p.137). According to Johnson and Guzmán (2012), PAR is rather a research approach or a methodological space, rather than a research method. This fact allows and demands PAR to use various methods and devices (Johnson and Guzmán, 2012, p. 406). PAR is tended to be used to understand the marginalized or oppressed (Torre and Fine, 2006; Johnson and Guzmán, 2012), in this case, it would be the youth students. There are many discourses of mainstream youth being marginalized or oppressed. In this study, we will not go further with this discourse. Anyhow, we will classify the youth as marginalized and oppressed as PAR with youth allows the researchers to make social change and help youth development (Cahill, 2007, p.298). In this study, PAR leans towards Reconstructionist version to lead youth towards greater equity, greater social justice, and more sustainable society (Bresler, 1995, p.18). PAR can be considered as a branch of Grounded Theory, which is getting trendy recently. Even though action research by teachers started earlier, for media education it started only by mid-1980s (Buckingham and Sefton-Green, 1996, p.224). Out of many principles of PAR projects, I tried to set up my study in accordance with Powers and Allaman's principles (2012). 1) Keeping students involved, 2) Establishing respectful and understanding space for differences through sharing culturally responsive, anti-racist, and social-justice contents, 3) Making their knowledge count, 4) Giving freedom of communication to move between topics (Powers & Allaman, 2012, p.4-5).

Additionally, this PAR project took the same basic elements of qualitative research. It was not set up as a laboratory set up but used the natural classroom environment with flexibly designed structure.

I either borrowed or created the tools and the materials used in this project. The details of the plans and materials of this project do not refer to any groundwork research. This means that the research I conducted does not have any acknowledgeable scientific foothold. On the other hand, this research is a unique and experimental attempt. All documents and interviews collected in this project were made into transcripts, coded, and inductively analyzed. I tried to use multiple sources of data under theoretical based foundation to have interpretive, holistic account of understanding in order to understand better what participants intend to say. It is true that the researcher's role is essential as they lead and interpret the symptoms. Nonetheless, participants take a big role in qualitative research as the research is aiming to understand the participants.

### 3.2.2. Digital Storytelling

Another significant factor that takes a role in this project is digital storytelling theory. According to Bernard (2006), digital storytelling is a composite of multi-content aiming to present specific idea or topic via media. All three types of the digital storytelling triaged from Bernard, fit the purpose of choosing such contents used in the research. 1) Personal narratives, 2) Historical Documentaries, 3) Purpose to inform or instruct about specific concept or practice (Bernard, 2006). Some of the created contents contain more than one type of these elements. According to Hakanurmi (2017), the main form of digital storytelling is videos with music or sound effect. Nonetheless, Hakanurmi (2017) points out that digital storytelling is not limited to video but also other creation using all types of digital media. The creation can be about oneself and also about their culture. As this type of digital creation is beyond merely being academic, it allows students to have a different work phase and to implicate diverse learning styles. *Digital Storytelling theory* claims that making a digital creation helps students to improve several types of literacies and to complement literacy skills together with other various studying skills. This study will be using the term *Media and Information Literacy (hereafter MIL)* as it clearly contains every aspect of literacy claimed in *Digital Storytelling theory*.

Alvermann & Hagood (2000) takes audiences' media text similar to cultural text. As cultural text is more than a mere reflection of history, they claim that the audience does not simply reflect a text message through media content. Instead, such media contents produce meanings which make future cultural text consisting historical and social elements. Such logic made a movement on researchers who are interested in critical media literacy to select cultural studies framework rather than media studies (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000, p. 194-195). On the other hand, Digital Natives like multi-tasking, graphics, random access, fun-based activities. In order to fulfill their demands, they have to have instant gratification and rewards (Presky, 2001). This is the reason why I chose certain media

contents and tools in our study. In the study, students were to access various sites and videos related to culture and diversity. Students were also in part of real-time activities which was aligned with the discussion. Using digital story and graphics can become very attractive education tool, in a mixture of visual and textual information. Even though the pace at which information is transmitted is completely determined by the viewer and the consumption of media is unpredictable that even the same media content can lead different responses from people of similar cultural backgrounds (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000, p.194), it can serve as an intermediate step for difficult disciplines and concepts by having a storyline and visual information.

### 3.3. Procedures based on research questions

The project's research questions are considering 2 areas. *Table 1* (see below) shows how each research question is linked to data-collecting methods.

Research Questions	Data-gathering methods
<b>Participants' understanding related to learning</b> R1. How youths' understanding of media contents support multicultural learning?	Observation Participants' reports Interview Feedback of teachers and 3rd observers
<b>Development of cultural identity related to learning</b> R2. How youths' media literacies skills related to their understanding of media contents support individual identity development?	Survey comparison Observation Participants' reports Interview

**TABLE 1. Research questions and methods**

As being a PAR project, the youth participants' experience is valued. To facilitate their experience into a displayed mode, I tried to encourage them to engage in discussions, critical reflections, and creations of a new perspective. Following the guideline of Powers & Allaman's (2012), I tried to provide full right to speak out their knowledge or thoughts. Anyhow, at the same time, aimed to create a right tone for anti-racist, social justice, and sustainable diversity. To assist youth participants' expressing themselves on delicate topics in their mind, I did not put up any limit on media tool regarding their media creation.

The primary project, which eventually collapsed, was planned around mid-February 2017 with 3<sup>rd</sup> graders of an upper secondary school in Finland. The project fell through with only the attempt of conducting pre-survey. Supervising teacher stated that the cause of project failure is mostly due to

them being ‘graduates-to-be’. The matriculation examination was coming up soon, there was no motivation for the students to study longer on an extra curriculum, there was no motivation as there is no direct reward, and lastly, participants were not active learners in a normal situation either according to the supervising teacher. After the first project crashed, since no one showed up in the first session, it seemed the project would fully close out. Fortunately, the next chance came upon mid-March 2017.

The project was planned upon one branch of geography curriculum, *A Common World (GE2)* (Figure 6). In the beginning, as I made the teaching plan thinking the classes will be separated from the normal curriculum, I had to readjust the content to the subject given. It was a huge modification and made the surveys and contents slightly off the rail since the primary focus was only on culture. Still, it was a fruitful experience to learn and follow the teacher’s guideline together with the curriculum guide. Eventually, this 2 sessions ended up to be neither a normal curriculum nor fully independent. It had been set up for geography subsidizing class. Anyhow it was conducted as separate from the normal curriculum in the end. The contents of the lecture were made trying to follow the principles retrieved from Banks et al.’s (2001) *Multicultural Education Guidelines for Intergroup Relations* (Figure 7). Details of the contents are described in following chapters.

## 2. A common world (GE2)

### OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the course are for students to

- know how to use the concepts of cultural geography and to interpret phenomena and structures related to human activity, making use of the theories and models of cultural geography;
- be familiar with different cultures and be able to assess factors that have contributed to their development;
- be able to analyse population trends and settlement characteristics in different regions of the world and the causes and effects of urbanisation;
- be able to assess the effects of opportunities provided by natural resources and the environment on human activity in different regions and understand the significance of ecologically and economically sustainable development;
- be familiar with the objectives of regional planning and its means to influence;
- be familiar with the different manifestations of differences in development;
- be able to assess people’s well-being, the state of the environment and culturally and socially sustainable development today and in the future in the different regions of the world.

**FIGURE 6. Description of A common world (GE2) (National Core Curriculum for Basic Education, 2003, Finnish National Board of Education)**

### *Intergroup Relations*

*Principle 5: Schools should create or make salient super ordinate crosscutting group memberships in order to improve intergroup relations.*

*Principle 6: Students should learn about stereotyping and other related biases that have negative effects on racial and ethnic relations.*

*Principle 7: Students should learn about the values shared by virtually all cultural groups (e.g., justice, equality, freedom, peace, compassion, and charity).*

*Principle 8: Teachers should help students acquire the social skills needed to interact effectively with students from other racial, ethnic, cultural, and language groups.*

*Principle 9: Schools should provide opportunities for students from different racial, ethnic, cultural, and language groups to interact socially under conditions designed to reduce fear and anxiety.*

FIGURE 7. **James A. Bank. Multicultural Education Guidelines for Intergroup Relations**

### 3.4. Data collecting methods

To ensure collection of relevant data and to enable triangulation, the project held a variety of data-gathering methods. Such classroom-based action research work has the tendency to use a broad range of methods such as observation, individual and small-group interviews and surveys, students' own media productions, and written reflection (Buckingham and Sefton-Green, 1996, p.228). This had a side effect of having too much work task for the participants, which made some of them discontinue. Still, having this much of data gathering methods was inevitable considering that the data collection was obliged to happen within 2 sessions in a week and that the author had to play multiple roles in the project as a researcher, educator, and participant. It was important for the project to collect as much as data to minimize researcher's bias and as the study is counting participants as prosumers of media, it was inevitable to have so many to perform.

During the lecture, participants were encouraged to participate in discussions. There are two perspectives on how discussions should proceed. One of the concepts is "Community of practice" which claims having continuous reproductive gathering between students with sustainable belief



makes discussions smooth and fluent (Sasha and Duffy, 2012). Not on the full contrary, yet, Jokikokko's (2010) argument contains slightly different perspective on continuity. He argues that it is not always positive to have a long-term community. Such long-term community practices can block taking in new opinions and voices. So keeping the balance between "Practice field" and "Community of practice" and changing members in "Community of practice" was important as it can enhance cooperation and mutual learning between and within the community. Following the similar logic, this project tried to form lectures, personal tasks, group tasks, and discussions by shuffling group members despite it being only 8 students.

The project puts equivalent importance in "Vicarious experiences" from multimodal media as mentioned in the first chapter. Video, games, photos, and literature can make positive changes in students' racial attitudes as much as or even more than direct experiences. The aims of each data-gathering method are described below.

***First Survey:*** This qualitative survey was conducted to find out the basic knowledge and opinions regarding culture and prejudice of the participants. The survey included questions asking facts about South Korea and their perspective of difference and stereotyping.

***The Culture Life Study essay (sorted as digital storytelling):*** It was used to gain a sense of student's personal experience regarding cultural openness/closeness, which could be linked to the replies from the first survey. The essay was to write at least half a page, which contains direct/indirect experiences of facing other cultures in their life. They were encouraged to add pictures, video, links, drawings, graphs, or whatever they think it is applicable to the essay.

***2 sessions of lectures (4-hour length, some materials sorted as digital storytelling):*** The lectures were carried out on 21<sup>st</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> March 2017. Several media tools, such as blogs, movies, and VR were used. There were discussions and map drawing activity to stimulate engagement of the participants. To give the participants small motivation being in class, various Asian snacks were provided during the class. The contents of lectures were mainly covering the concept of culture, how culture and geography relate to each other, how one's identity can be defined, and how power distance plays its role in the society and in the world. Korean culture and geographical characters were the main examples taken in the lecture, as it was the most familiar factors to the researcher. However, also other countries culture, history, and characters were mentioned in the context. For example, there were contents related to Muslim, historical wars, Kenya, Taiwan, and more. There were efforts to

authenticate the contents by checking the facts from various sources and asking the friends from certain nations if the content appears neutral.

***Media creation (Literacy artifacts, sorted as digital storytelling):*** As media literacy also covers creation and production of media, the students were asked to make a media creation covering either geography, culture, or whatever related to the project. Moreover, I expected such creation to help them reduce alienation towards and help them assimilate into other culture. The type of media was free of restriction. A video, animation, powerpoint presentation, blog, song or any other format was welcomed. To assist them to expand their knowledge and choice of creation, links related to media creation were provided.

***Learning diary:*** After all of the activities (2 sessions of lectures, one Korean movie out of their choice, a project-customized blog made by the author, and more), the participants were asked to write in total 2-page length of learning diary.

***Ethnographic style notes (Research diary):*** During the period of data collection, ethnographic- style field notes were kept to record observations from the researcher's point of view. The research notes also included informal comments and feedback made by the class teacher, the internship supervisor (Sirkku Kotilainen), peer students of Media Education (Sei Kwon, Jui-Ping Hung), and the participants as all of them were attending the lecturing sessions,

***Second Survey:*** The post-survey was distributed to the participants containing similar but different questions from the first survey. The aim was to see if their knowledge or opinions made any change after the research. The survey consisted questions about the necessity of media education, media literacy, and multicultural education.

***Interview:*** Students marked in their consent letter whether or not they are willing to participate in the interview. 4 out of 8 who agreed were scheduled for an interview a week after the submission of the last task. To have more intimacy, confidential, and to have less bias, unstructured open-ended interviews were organized individually. Most of the questions emerged during discussions with participants. The interviewed participants were encouraged to share their in-depth opinion about the overall research project and to share some personal impression and experiences they had as those are impossible to pick up only through observation. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed before being analyzed.

***E-mail interview:*** A written questionnaire was sent to the class teacher to see the teacher's educational point of view on this project. This step was done through e-mail as conducting the project alone was already heavy workload and time-consuming. Besides, it was almost impossible to set up a personal interview time with the subject teacher due to the teacher's availability.

### 3.5. Data analysis

In this study, data analysis is focused on analyzing the content itself. *Google survey* was used as the surveying tool. In the survey, most questions were asking for participant's opinion by short or long descriptions. There were some linear scale questions. Anyhow, it was not meant for the quantitative reason. It was rather for students to self-diagnose and self-identify themselves. Interviews, notes, and other data collections were primarily documented in text version and then content-analyzed. I tried to analyze objectively and thoroughly, by doing continuous revise and evaluation.

## 4. RESEARCH RESULTS

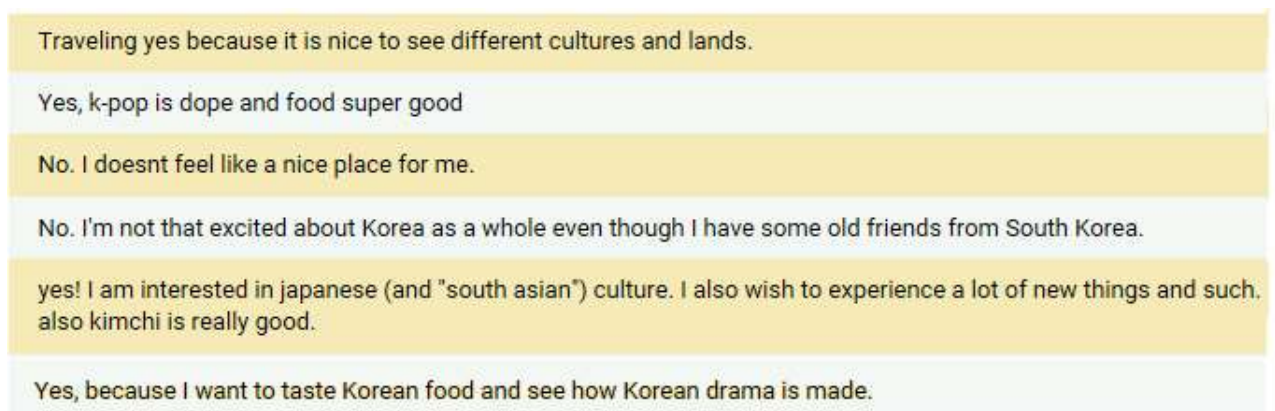
### 4.1. Findings

The early findings are focusing on the relation of each student's prior experience, life, and perspective. Then the study moves the focus to how this action research project impacts on the participants' multicultural perspective.

#### A. First survey

The first survey was to gather basic information of the students about how they identify themselves and what perspectives they have on various topics. As mentioned above, the study happens to cover topics mainly about Korea, which reduced the chance of focusing more on culture and media education than I initially planned. Eventually, the first survey was functioning as pre-step preparing students to think about Korea and cultural diversity.

Students had more knowledge about Korea than I expected. Even though they all answered that they have less than medium knowledge about Korea's location, national flag, culture, language, main business and so on, they all picked the right answers to the questions asking location, flag, and economic level of Korea.



Traveling yes because it is nice to see different cultures and lands.
Yes, k-pop is dope and food super good
No. I doesnt feel like a nice place for me.
No. I'm not that excited about Korea as a whole even though I have some old friends from South Korea.
yes! I am interested in japanese (and "south asian") culture. I also wish to experience a lot of new things and such. also kimchi is really good.
Yes, because I want to taste Korean food and see how Korean drama is made.

FIGURE 8. Answers to considering visiting South Korea for various reasons

We don't talk about having racism in Finland but the fact is that we have it a lot and we don't do much to stop it
i think it is stupid. I don't feel racism should exist.
I don't support racism, but sometimes I might have some prejudices towards some people.
I think those words are carelessly thrown around in today's world. People get offended on other peoples behalf. In general tough they're both awful, racism being the worse one of the two. Everyone has some sort of stereotypes, but they can be easily be broken. Whereas racism is a bigger and deeper problem. Just like culture, they are also difficult to define and to have a solid opinion on. Both are not good things tough.
I think that racism is wrong and unfair.
It is absolutely wrong and people should fight against it.

FIGURE 9. **Answers to participants' opinion about racism and prejudice**

The survey (*Examples attached as Figures*) showed that the participants have pre-knowledge of Korea and most of them had interest in some other cultures. Most of the participants showed interest in visiting Korea (*Figure 8*). In addition, the survey proved that the students are having a negative perception of racism, discrimination, and prejudice. It was shown (*Figure 9, 10*) in their replies that they feel the necessity to challenge that kind of cultural negativity.

Yes most of the time
Yes, they are often very negative
I think that it is stupid because it usually leads to misunderstanding. But it cant be stopped as it comes naturally for some people, like me.
So that you can experience new things and be more accepting. It also can (in some cases) affect equality between individuals. Also life is a lot more fun if you stop thinking of other people as negative things.
Yes because if people don't understand something different, it is very hard to make (like companies etc.) the world global. People should have encourage to face new things, because it is important for our lives to communicate and understand each other.
Yes, because we all make assumptioms about stuff and most likely they are not true.

FIGURE 10. **Answers about importance or necessity challenging prejudice**

As *Figure 11* shows, the participants had a basic idea of what culture is even though it is not supported by any cultural theories or studies. 7 of participants marked that media education will have a moderate effect in long-term, whereas 1 participant marked on 'very high efficiency of media education' when

used as a tool of understanding other cultures, reducing prejudice, and gaining equality. All of the participants seemed to have noticed the potentiality of implementing media education elements in multicultural education.

Things that man does everyday
All kinds of things and thoughts from different groups of people from all over the world.
That is really difficult. I'd say it is made of language, arts (painting, music, theater etc.), social norms (shoes in the house or not, marriage, values), things affected by the location (food, jobs), history, political things (leaders, do they concentrate on individuals or communities, economics) and a lot of other factors. But those are the ones I consider the biggest (out of which I think social norms might be in my opinion the most important)
Culture is based on habits, nationalities and everything inside the country.
I think that culture consists of art, music and traditions.
It something you can see, taste, feel, or parti

FIGURE 11. How participants define Culture

### B. The Culture Life Study essay

From the participants' short essays about their major cultural experiences, it was clearly shown that their tunnel of cultural connection was either by traveling or through media. Reading their essays, it seemed participants naturally spotted the cultural difference and why such difference occurs. Despite that the instruction did not ask them to analyze the reason for having cultural differences, many of the participants pointed out that the cultural differences can be caused by climate, religion, history and so on. For better understanding, here are some of the participants' replies directly extracted from their essays.

<b>Heta</b>	I had been so many times in Spain. I think, that people are much friendly than in Finland. And I think that their culture is more colorful than ours. My opinion is that their culture consists of rhythmic music and some flamingo dances. I have also watched Los Serranoes that is Spanish series. In that series, I have learnt some little things about Spanish culture.
<b>Kia</b>	In summer at year 2014, I was in Turkey Alanya. It was quite different to Finland. The religion there is very different. Islam is very visible religion, because the Muslims have responsibilities, they pray five times a day, they have different diet, women dress differently etc. And I have been to Italy almost a year ago and the climate was different there, and the people acted kind of more energetic. Maybe because the sun is shining and the nature there is so lovely.
<b>Tommi</b>	I liked the Korean and the Polish cultures most because their histories are interesting. It was just last week when I received a package from one of my South Korean friends, which contained all kinds of sweets and posters.

Whenever the topic of youths' media use comes up, concerns about unfiltered information effecting on youth pop up together. As this study assumes media having a strong effect on the audience, I do not deny the side effect caused by media. However, this can be solved by developing youth's media literacy as it will help them to develop a critical mindset towards media contents. Additionally, Henna's case shows that not all of the students are exposed to media being defenseless about what they see, hear, read from media.

<b>Henna</b>	I also started to watch more and more anime, and learned about the real japanese culture. I understood that anime and reality were completely different things. I liked both of them. I wasn't disappointed that the reality was so different from anime, but rather it got me more into it. The most important anime I watched was fairy tail. It gave me hope and the will to be a better person. I still feel like the impact fairy tail left in me has shaped me to become the current me.
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Zhou, who had a multicultural background, was aware how multicultural environment enriched his life. Zhou stated that he had a positive attitude about facing multiculturalism in early age. He went to a school composed of 30 different nationalities and he counted it as a positive aspect of his life. He said it helped him to understand people better with a difference and allowed him to perceive various approaches to culture.

<b>Zhou</b>	Throughout my life, I have been living in one the largest suburb in Finland. It's Hervanta. Hervanta is the place that has been known for immigrants and homeless peoples place. Since the times I went to nursery school, I knew I was privileged to live in Hervanta, because I believe that by understanding different habits, cultures etc. makes a different. Multicultural environment has made me understand people better and see things from many aspects.
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### **C. 2 sessions of lectures**

For the geography related sessions, data were mainly collected by observing the participants. Additionally, collected feedback and informal comments from the supervisor and peers of Media Education program. They were invited to the classroom for observing the overall session. Some of the participants' feedback was collected as well via WhatsApp after the session. Both of the sessions were composed to use as much as various types and channels of media. Photos, videos, graphics, articles were shown in the class using varied media channels of PowerPoint, YouTube, PowToon,



blogs, TED talk, Facebook, WhatsApp, internet news sites, several VR channel and so on (*Figure 12*).



FIGURE 12. **Sample of contents used in the lecture**

Overall, both sessions were smoothly conveyed. The subject teacher complimented that the presentation was easy going and interesting to follow. Kwon and Hung, peers from media education program, shared both positive and critical comments on several matters; the atmosphere, content, and procedure of the class. Both of them thought it was a good idea and a clever move to prepare the Asian snacks. They could see that snacks made students put their guard down and lighten up the atmosphere by sharing reaction with each other.

VR was the major reason that allowed this project to have at least 8 participants and elicited the most response from this project. Students were immersed in while trying VR (*Figure 13*). I used 4 different contents of VR showing Korea, India, Finland, and Germany. City Compass and Tampere VR application were borrowed from HTI (Human technology and interaction) department of UTA. Other than City Compass and Tampere VR application, there were two custom-made VR sites for this project. City Compass is an online virtual navigational application (*Figure 14*), which allows you to view the certain district of the certain country. Though City Compass's titled function is to learn language and computer skills, I thought this application can be used as a tool to decrease the gap of cultural aspects. Because City Compass shows the daily street view and local peoples ordinary life. The effect of learning culture would have been bigger if the application was a video with local events. None the less, City Compass was effective enough to the participants. The VR sites that were custom-made for this project allowed the participants to have 360 views. Moreover, as I was told that the participants have interest in VR, I allotted a separate section providing tips for planning and shooting VR content. Most of the participants commented that experiencing VR was fascinating and exciting.



Even though they are the Digital Native, VR seemed to be a new technology for them. Still, none of them showed any technophobic reaction. They were all showing huge interest in the new technology. Henna wrote ‘We also tested the VR glasses that showed us pictures of Tampere. That was really cool and I think it would be a great way to learn about other cultures and languages. I think it could be used in learning from now on’. Not only from Henna’s comment but also collecting other participants’ comment on VR experience, it was proven that understanding media contents can support multicultural learning.

<p><b>Tommi</b></p>	<p>We got to experience environments through VR and it was awesome! It was so immersive as you could interact with the world. The best thing was that it was a completely new experience. My friend has a set of VR equipment and you can walk around the virtual world if you walk in real life. I haven’t tested it yet but it would be super cool! The virtual reality industry will certainly grow a lot throughout these years to come.</p>
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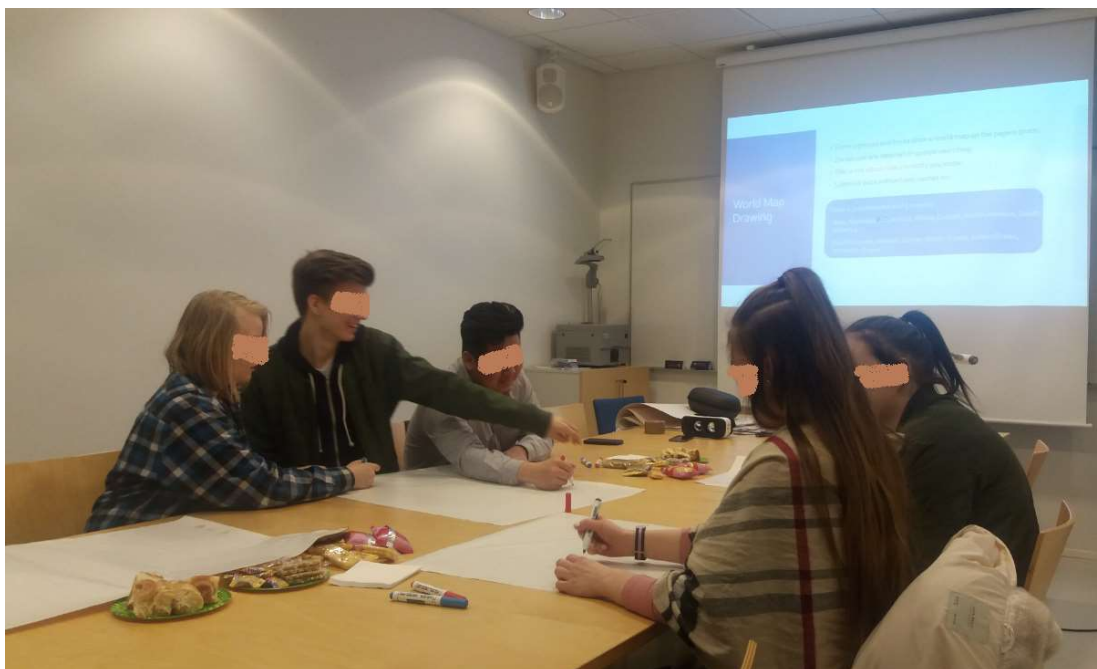


**FIGURE 13. Participants trying VR glasses in the classroom**



FIGURE 14. Main page of City Compass(upper) and one of sample scenery of VR content

It seemed world map drawing activity evoked students' attention as all three of interviewed students mentioned about map drawing. They said it would have been nice to know how their map drawing went with a factual account. Frankly, I purposely skipped commenting on the students' drawing as the purpose of map drawing was not about judging their knowledge. World map drawing activity was to help students trigger themselves to notice which parts of the world they were ignorant about or neglected unconsciously. People tend to have better knowledge about nearby countries and their own. Furthermore, some people believe they know about certain things correctly when it is wrong or distorted. The aim of this activity was to make a crack on their eggshell, not dragging them out of the shell with my personal judgment. The students had to draw a map without using any media tool. They could only do the task by discussing between them within half an hour (*Figure 15*).



**FIGURE 15. Participants being active in drawing world map**

Kia's comment on her learning diary shows that the purpose of this activity worked properly. 'The lessons made me question my earlier thoughts. Like I thought that I know even a little bit about the world map. But I really had no clue where is Afghanistan located, for example.' Here, in *Figure 16*, I attached the students' drawing. As it can be seen, the participants had a basic knowledge of the continents. There were discussions among the participants if North and South America is different continents while drawing. This was a good question as how many continents there are differs from





FIGURE 16. World map participants drawn (upper), comparison with digital world map (middle, lower)

whether or not to count South America separately and it is taught differently from cultures (from <http://www.worldatlas.com/articles/does-the-world-have-6-or-7-continent.html>). It is not that students draw well or accurate. However, this activity allowed students to have a chance to look back their worldview and blind spots.

Kwon, one of my peer students of Media Education program, shared her observation saying “Most of the students seemed to highly concentrate on watching videos which have interesting topics for them and those which are not in conventional format. Visualized materials seemed to work well in the class in grabbing students’ attention”. Yet, she criticized the part distributing movie could have been organized better and pair discussions seemed to take too much time. Hung, the other peer student who observed the class, commented on world map drawing. “Drawing activity is a good way to let the students reflect their point of view of the world. Also, putting it at the beginning of the class is a good warm-up activity.” She also gave positive feedback on the videos shown to the students. “Even though I saw some information before, a good video can be more efficient than just reading. It gave more vivid concept”. Kotilainen, professor of our media education department and my internship supervisor, commented that the contents were good and fruitful. She mentioned many students were interested in immigrants’ issues and VR itself. She added giving more weight on the VR would have been intriguing participants’ interest even more.

Zhou was the most active participant in this project as a whole and gave enormously positive feedback. “Your lesson was awesome today! It was very interesting and fun. ☺ Plus the snack foods were very thoughtful of you (big smiley emoticon)”. At the beginning of the project, Zhou declined to take part in the interview. Anyhow, after we warmed up to each other, he agreed to participate in the interview. He said if it can help me out with the project, he will be very willing to. Not only from Zhou but the 2 lecturing sessions had quite positive feedback from the participants. Kia also stated in her learning diary that the lecture made her look back at herself and that she loved the foods. She added that not every food was her taste but it was interesting to taste new flavors. The gustatory sensation is obviously one way to experience a culture and to attract people into the culture.

#### **D. Movie & Blog**

Movie files were hard to be distributed to the participants than I expected due to the copyright and the size of the files. Fortunately, the participants voluntarily suggested watching the movies via Netflix saying that they all are subscribed. On the other hand, as it was anticipated, watching a movie was not well controlled. The movies which participants chose to watch couldn’t be limited to a certain genre nor the pre-selected movies from me. Before knowing movie distribution will be this

difficult, I selected the movies under criteria of reflecting more realities and cultural aspects. According to participants' learning diary, it seemed only 3 out of 5 watched a random Korean movie. Those who watched a movie pointed out they could see some cultural aspects of Korea from the movie. The participants found cultural elements in industries, characters, communities, and the lifestyle.

<b>Zhou</b>	Pandora is a Korean drama about nuclear energy-factory accidents and how catastrophic they can be. I learned that nuclear is very important for Korea's economic and there are many nuclear energy-factories in Korea. Just a couple words about Korean dramas.. I think that Korean actors are usually overacting and they just scream and shout until their throats get dry. It just don't seem really realistic but it is very impressive.
<b>Tommi</b>	I also watched the movie Snow piercer but didn't have time to finish it as I was in a hurry with other projects. It's an interesting movie about a failed climate change experiment which killed all life on Earth but a few lucky ones survived. All the survived humans were transported to a high-speed train. To make everything work, the people there founded new communities and settled in different sections of the train. And of course, there were some difficulties between the communities.

According to what Zhou and Tommi shared in their learning diaries, Zhou chose the movie 'Pandora' and Tommi chose the movie 'Snow piercer'. 'Pandora' is sorted as a genre of drama and thriller while 'Snow piercer' is sorted as drama, action, sci-fi, and fantasy. Even though movies describes a real-life situation and way of expressions exaggerated, it still allows you have the glimpse of the culture. I guess it was the reason why Zhou mentioned it seems overacting to scream so much. However, I do agree we South Koreans yell and scream often compared to Finnish. The movies they chose were all quite popular ones in Korea, which proves they appealed to the public.

<b>Tommi</b>	Today I read the course blog a bit. There were links that lead to different videos about cultures and their differences. It's nice to hear people telling about their own country or just about anything culture relating. However, there were some inappropriate When I look at the comments of any video in the internet, there are usually very confused or racist joking people. Of course, it is just a comment section where everyone can be anonymous but they should see the reality and look up some facts before commenting anything. There was also a video where Angelina Jolie cooks bugs. At first it might seem gross for everybody but when you start to think about it a little more, you may find it very interesting. They're like, for example, shrimps that look a little odd but may taste very good. And there's the classic prejudice that somebody might think that Cambodians eat spiders and other insects only. This is of course not true.
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On the other hand, despite it was difficult to check or control participants watching movies, participants who were interviewed confirmed they went and checked the contents of a custom-made blog for this project (<https://culturaldiversityeducation.wordpress.com/>). Nonetheless, only Tommi wrote down the fact of viewing the blog and his opinion in the learning diary. He wrote down the details regarding the video he saw and it was interesting to see that he noticed the existence of cyber-bullying while surfing the blog. This was a positive function of having media education, learning how cyber-bullying happens, why it is inappropriate, and how to react on such.

### **E. Digital Storytelling, Media creation & Learning diary**

Unlike my expectation, 4 participants out of 6 made PowerPoint for media creation task. Some inserted still images while some others added text. Their main theme was to introduce Finland's culture including food, sports, music, tradition, politics, climate and nature, and other Finnish characteristics. Tommi's creation was also made with PowerPoint, however, his theme was unique apart from others'. He presented his future hope of becoming an artist who creates something that can amuse people. For Tommi, it seemed like creating an online game can be also counted as his work of art if it can positively influence people. He put importance on learning more about art, language, and culture. He wished to travel around the world to learn cultures so that he can redefine his identity.



Western people while eating cows: "-It's horrible when people eat dogs!"

Indian people while eating chickens: "-It's horrible people eat holy cows!"

Vegetarian: "How horrible it is when people eat meat!!"

What are the differences? None. We just think everything we do is right. Open your eyes humanity ☺

**FIGURE 17. Participant Zhou's meme**



In contrast to the majority of students, Zhou and Henna made media creation using different media tools. It was outstanding from other PowerPoint creation with its uniqueness. Zhou made a ‘Meme’ (Figure 17) using striking photos along with humorous phrases to show how perspectives can be different from cultures. Through the ‘Meme’, Zhou was claiming the need to broaden one’s perspective. He wrote in his learning diary as follows. ‘It [The meme] might seem a bit provocative. But I wanted to prove to humanity that we must learn from each other more and respect other peoples’ culture as well’. Henna’s media creation (Figure 18) was an interactive media content. She produced a game with RPG Maker MV. The game asked the user to choose a character and give a name to the character. Each stage of the game asked a question related to other countries’ culture. Even if the player chooses a wrong selection, the game will let the player proceed to the next stage providing information of the correct answer. Each and every creation had its own story and meaning reflecting participants’ identity. The participants’ digital storytelling contained partial of all three types of Bernard’s theory, which were mentioned in chapter 3. Additionally, as aforementioned, the digital storytelling allowed the students to have a different work phase and to implicate diverse learning styles.



Henna's media creation of game. You can set up name and gender. Each stage asks you a cultural quiz. Whether or not you choose the correct answer, you can go to the next stage.

FIGURE 18. Participant Henna’s game



The participants' learning diaries were showing that the lecture had a positive effect on their point of view on diversity and differences. One of the video contents that was shared in the class, how DNA tests show that we have a possibility of not being biologically 100% pure single ethnicity, impressed the participants and made them be immersed into the video ([www.youtube.com/letsopenourworld](http://www.youtube.com/letsopenourworld)). Some of them even wiped off their tears after seeing the video. As shown in participants' comment below, the lectures gave some of the participants an inspiration for changing their aspects of culture.

<b>Heta</b>	In this lesson I learned a lot, especially extracted from the culture of Korean culture. We watched the educational video, which got a lot out of it. One of the best in my opinion was the DNA video. It really got to think about and reflect on things. Watching video, I realized that the people can not be classified into any drawer or can not entirely say that I am Finnish, or any other peasant. But we all have certainly some kind of roots in other countries. Or at least, all of us have even small aspects of other cultures. In this lesson I learned also what other people might think from Finland and here in our culture. I also learned the ways of other cultures have. This hour was really nice and fruitful.
<b>Kia</b>	The lessons were really interesting. I actually learned how I generalize things, even though sometimes I think I do not. Generalizing cultures is the thing that we should avoid when you start to generalize in the negative perspective, that's what I know. I think the lessons were really educational, because I started to think more about others perspective, even though that is my goal always, but sometimes I forget it.

## F. Interview & Post-Survey

In the final part of the project, participants were asked for interview and post-survey. In overall, 3 participants attended the interview and 4 participants (including the 3 interviewed) filled in the post-survey. There were some significant terms that each interviewee was continuously using. For example, Henna was adding 'you know' in many comments. On the contrary, Zhou was rather using 'I don't know' or 'I think'. It was nothing about what they really know or not know. It was more a way of habitus expressions. In my personal opinion, which has no scientific basis except my observation on them, both Henna and Zhou tried to sympathize with others. Still, Zhou seemed to have a stronger likelihood of understanding diversity and multiculturalism. In similar connotation, Zhou said, "Maybe I am also racist at some level". This comment seems to be available for him due to his background being multinational, living in the so-called immigrant herb, and living his life in the eyes of racism and prejudices. Zhou stated in the class discussion that he has experienced and felt the racism in Finland himself. He said there were more troubles for him or his immigrant friends getting any kind summer job compared to non-immigrant friends. Henna retorted that also non-

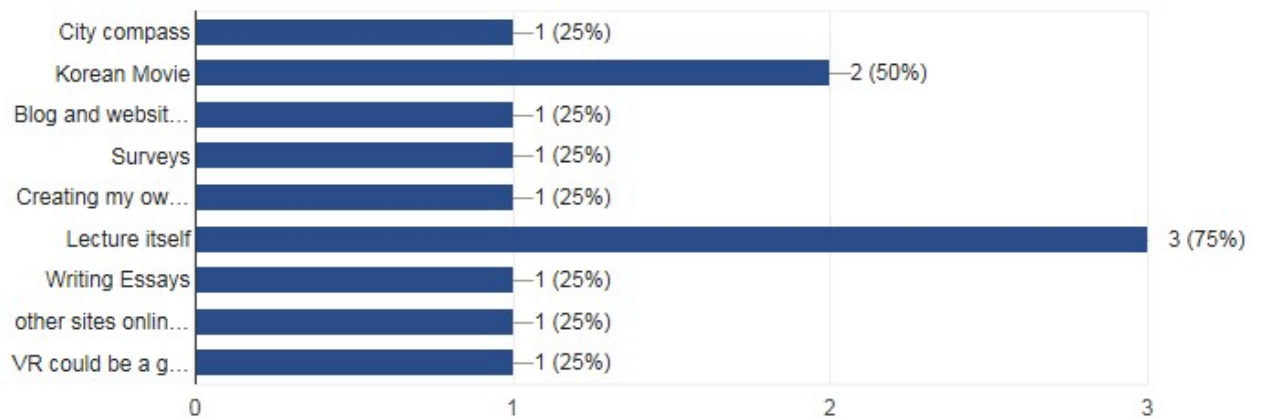
immigrant Finnish youth face a hard time getting a summer job. Both of their opinions make sense. Sometimes victim mentality exaggerates situations. On the other hand, it is also true that immigrants do not have the same opportunity as non-immigrants. This cannot be labeled as simple racist but can be a combination of several other reasons. I hope this discussion influenced to build niches of two different opinions on this matter.

Following the interviewees' comment, the lecture seems to have an impact in many ways. Zhou commented in the interview as following even though he considers himself quite multicultural. "The agenda was very familiar to me and there weren't many new things, I think. But I got new aspects of Korea and concept of culture." Henna said "Nothing much was new, but I guess it was nice activities and perspectives to know", "I might be already quite open-minded for several reasons. Our family traveled around Europe a lot when I was a kid. And my sister loved Japanese culture and was passionately sharing it with me. Lastly, I have never been taught our culture will be better than any other's". Unlike Zhou or Henna, Tommi self-diagnosed himself that he is not so much multicultural. Tommi said "It is not like I know a lot of other cultures but I am interested in it. There were interesting videos in the blogs, such as Angelina Jolie eating bugs. It seemed weird at first but started to feel natural".

Through the interview, I could realize each interviewee's attitude towards life was influenced by cultures they grew out of. Zhou gave an interesting comment regarding his identity. "Yeah. Maybe it [putting extra effort and trying to prove himself] is about that. Because people haven't seen me and I just want to prove even if you are from immigration background or refugee background, it doesn't matter. You can do whatever you want. You can succeed in life in Finland if you just really want to. You have to work for it. That's why I want to prove people and youth that anyone can do whatever you want". For Henna, such cultural influence came from Japanese fairytales. She said Japanese fairytales are different from Finnish fairytales. For Henna, Japanese fairytales are more intriguing because the moral lessons are intertwined in the storylines. She said she is quite sure it influenced her point of view on things. Based on the same reason, Zhou's submitted assignments and content of the interview seemed to make a conspicuous figure among others'. It seemed that his situation, being an immigrant student, brought in a unique perspective to this project. As Warriner (2007) mentioned, having ties to their countries of origin distinguishes the way how they build up their identity and worldview through dialogue and research (Warriner, 2007, p. 208).

The questions of the post-survey were similar to the pre-survey. This data collecting step was meant to check how participants' opinion or perspective changed. Still, the post-survey focused more on gathering the participants' opinion regarding the research questions. For example, Tommi stated on the pre-survey that he does not intend to visit Korea. Even though this project was a short-term

project, the project seemed to have changed his opinion. Because he wrote in his learning diary that he is willing to visit Korea and meet his friends. Despite this promising example, I had very low expectation on this survey as few participants seemed to drop out and the project was carried out in short period with only few hours to influence them. Moreover, there were some errors in the replies regarding the post-survey. Both Zhou and Tommi answered more negatively on the cultural difference in some of the questions compared to the pre-survey. As it was an unexpected result, I asked the reason during their interviews. They said they had put those replies in a hurry, confirming it as their mistake. Both of them said they were such in a rush with other projects and exams. Considering their confirmation and this being non-quantitative research, it is hard to give credibility to their post-survey results. In short, data was lacking to make a proper judgment. Still, I will present the result of the survey in the following.



#### *Options of above in detail*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> City compass                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Creating my own media  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Korean Movie           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lecture itself  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Blog and website given | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing Essays   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Surveys                           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>other sites online like the Finnish Korean embassy's webpage.</u> |

FIGURE 19. Participants opinion on the useful methods in this project (Multiple choices available)

All of the post-survey results showed positive responses on the necessity for having cultural related programs (school trips, guest speakers, media education and so on) in a normal school curriculum. Both questions ‘Can media education covering cultures, in long-term, help understanding other cultures, reducing prejudice, and gaining equality?’ and ‘Did this project help you to get a broader

point of view on other cultures?’ received either neutral or positive reactions from the respondents. As seen in *Figure 19*, lecturing sessions had quite a good reaction from the participants and the next was the Korean movies. In *Figure 20*, the participants shared how the project effected on their point of view in short sentences. I was glad to see that at least one participant mentioned how geography can effect on the difference of culture. Again here, it was clear that the DNA test video made a strong impression on them. According to *Figure 21*, the project allowed them to think more deeply about culture. Moreover, half of the respondent selected that they have learned about media and digital technologies through the project. I guess this means having a teacher scaffolding them in the class worked efficiently as that was the purpose of this project. Also, the respondents themselves remarked that media education was well implemented in this project.

Yes. As I said, I learnt many things and I think that I became a little more open minded.

Well it did make me think more of culture and what it is.

Well i got more open to other cultures and got lot of information about how there kinda is no "pure" nationalities

Yes, because I never thought that cultures are related to geographical location so much. Plus I realized that there is no "pure race" on earth.

FIGURE 20. Answer to whether the project effected on them and if yes, how.

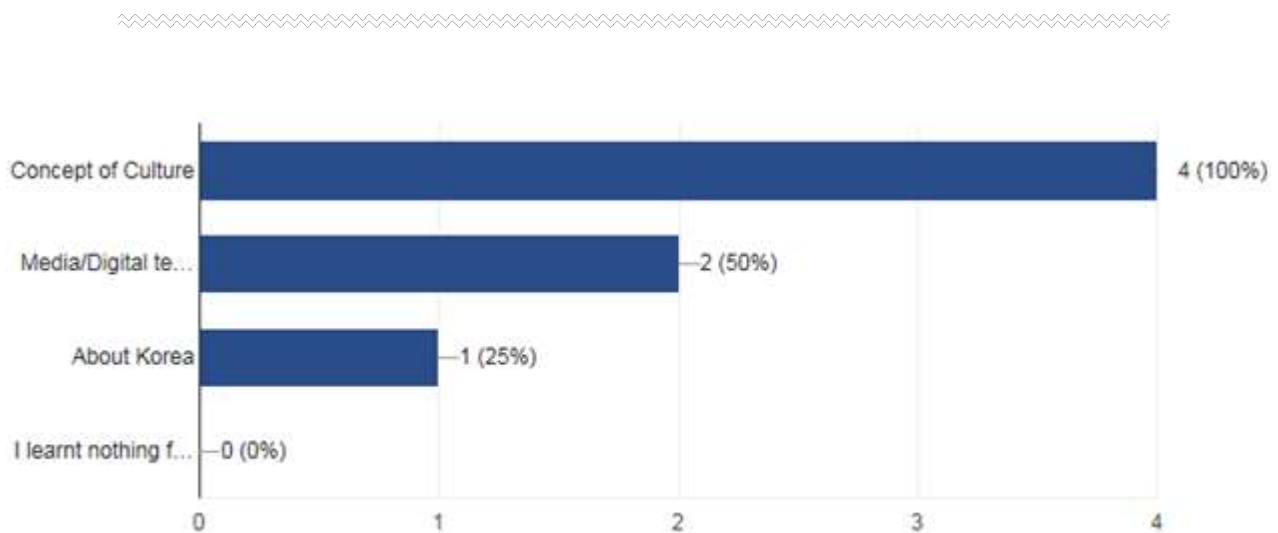


FIGURE 21. Answer to what skills/knowledge they learnt (Multiple choice available).

### **G. Feedback and Limitations of the project**

Regarding the teaching skill, the subject teacher complimented on the lecture and content inside the classroom. Anyhow, she refused to give any formal comment later on. On the other hand, the participants gave positive comments either through their learning diaries or WhatsApp. Most of them commented that the contents were good. The most memorable feedback was by Zhou. He gave feedback such as “It is so wonderful that you are paying attention to our stress levels. Thank you for your wishes! It somehow motivates me (big smiley emoticon)” and “Thank you for these interesting and well-planned lessons!”

Overall, some of the participants had good experience with the project as none of the post-survey respondents had a negative reaction in participating for another similar lecture if it was possible. None of the students complained about the length of lecturing hours and all agreed they would like to join other cultural lectures or other lectures I conduct. Regarding the lecture hours and the load of work, students’ opinion summed up to be averagely neutral even though it was quite of an amount. Half of them said it was too much workload to handle. This was predictable as this project was meant to be carried out for half or the whole semester when it was planned. Movies, blogs, media creation, and the surveys were all meant to be done together in class hours. Unfortunately, the last moment decision allocated me to have maximum 4 hours. I was even suggested to finish the project within 2 hours. However, I opposed to that suggestion saying that it will be impossible and meaningless. Such limitation of teaching hours forced the project plan to be readjusted. Yet I wished to distribute all the contents I prepared, so the only alternative was to leave it as individual homework. If we happened to carry out the whole contents in the class hours, the participants could have interacted with and bring questions to me and other participants. Moreover, this would have raised the participation rate and elevate the degree of completion.

At the end of the project, I asked the participants to suggest what will help this project become more fruitful. There were opinions as followings; more discussions, less assignment, and eligible timetable which avoids other regular curriculums. Apart from the project content, Henna and Kotilainen mentioned that the researcher being incapable of speaking and understanding Finnish was a disappointment. Both of them stated that there were many interesting discussions the participants shared in Finnish, which they got shy to share in English whenever the researcher questioned. Henna said “[I] suppose it would have been easier for you to understand if you spoke Finnish. Because we were talking about which should be really big. We drew Asia really big because ‘We know it’s big because it is really big’ then we kind of forgot about Africa. ‘So let’s just add it here’”. To increase

the accuracy of data analysis, language is obviously a crucial part. It is a pity but this was already counted in when this project was planned to be carried out in Finland with youth living in Finland.

## 4.2. Discussions

This project tried to seek how to integrate multicultural education elements into media education for mainstream youth within the school curriculum. Even though no significant result came out of this project itself, it is important to attempt to stimulate youth's mindset regarding diversity so that they can make and live in a harmonious world. Through this study, the participants got opportunities to try new things outside the original curriculum. This project allows the readers to see how important it is to involve the mainstream youth even though it is hard. Moreover, such youth PAR project is important as it allows the researcher to achieve information from the youth directly and to understand where youth are standing regarding the topic researcher is looking into.

There was no unusual or significant result from this project. The project result suggests that human perception is hard to change in sudden. Nonetheless, by twisting and stimulating their way of thinking can provide some ideas to the participants on multicultural learning, media literacy, and even their own identity. The project was planned at my own discretion without following any scientific models or facts. I planned the details of the project based on the several courses I took during my master program. I tried to take as many as courses regarding media education, education, and culture study and seek a way to stimulate participants' way of thinking. Even though there was no significant result from this project, I believe every step of life experience gives us a lesson. Despite the data is quite small, I personally take this study meaningful enough for giving me a teaching practice experience. Moreover, it is more than enough that the participants commented that this project made them rethink their cultural experiences and redefine their identities. In other words, the data shows youths' understanding media contents supported their multicultural learning and made them rethink about how other's culture is different from their own. In the media creation task, most of the participants defined themselves as Finnish and described what Finnish culture is. On the other hand, some of them expressed strongly about their identity out from Finnish culture. For example, Tommi expressed what his future dream will be and how culture will influence his dream. Zhou's work reflected how he wants to make a strong stand on cultural difference while he realizes that people give prejudiced and discriminative eyes to him and his culture. Henna's media creation shows her interest in other culture and game production. Henna's work proves that she already knows how to integrate gamification into cultural learning.

As the aforementioned limits in previous subsections were mainly focused on the lecturing sessions, here I will share a wider range of limits I faced from the project as the whole. Inevitably, there was power-relationship between being an adult teacher and being a young student subject (Buckingham and Sefton-Green, 1996, p.229). Besides, researcher, myself, was not capable to speak participants' native language. This incapability made the researcher impossible to understand participants' small chats and private conversations while it was clearly commented by the supervisor and one of the participants that important discussions were exchanged between the participants. Moreover, a short period of collecting the data and two short lecturing sessions did not help to share more information as there was not enough time to lower the guards. Limitation of time made it difficult for the participants to try on all the tools and media contents the researcher planned. As aforementioned in Chapter 3, watching movies and blogs, making media creation, and taking part in the surveys were all meant to be done together in class. If this project was carried out as a course for whole period or semester, there would have been higher chance to teach and help them with new media tools. Additionally, it would have been easier to know how and what the participants learned from producing texts and other media elements. Not being inside the curriculum, I could not give out school credits or prizes to motivate the students. This made the procedures for collecting the participants and motivating the participants to continue or engage very difficult. Despite so many limitations, the project itself seemed meaningful for concerned people of the project and I hope it is meaningful for the readers. And I would like to express my gratitude to the participants who helped me through this project.

As we are heading to the end, I would like to share some quotations which state that the pedagogical or educational result can differ from certain circumstance and the flow of time. "Good teaching" is not an unconditional concept but rather can only be defined within the cultural background for it is not a universal concept (Martusewicz and Edmundson, 2005, p.7). According to what Ainley (1993) states, the variability of education doesn't only limit on teaching but extends to those who learn. "You do not know what use your students will put the skills and information they learn (Ainley, 1993)". Creswell (2014) also points out the variability of knowledge itself. "Human knowledge is conjectural rather than unchallengeable and that our warrants for knowledge can be withdrawn in light of further investigations (Creswell, 2014, p. 56)". Setting up a globally unified curriculum for [media] education is impossible as there are differentials of the infrastructure of schools and socio-political circumstances exists (Kotilainen and Pathak-Shelat, 2015, p.154-156 cited in Ruokamo, Kotilainen, Kupiainen & Maasilta, 2016, p.4). Shortly, there is no correct answer for teaching nor absolute knowledge. We just have to keep trying to modify and verify things according to the era and situations. Based on the fact that we have to continuously try to modify and verify to

increase the quality of education, I hope some follow-up studies would be done. As suggested in chapter 3, having a comparative research between nations will give a chance to the participants to communicate with each other directly covering non-limited topics. Through this, the participants will understand and respect diversity. Lastly, this study calls up the need for curricular change following with development of multi-cultural learning materials. If such understanding and respect towards the difference can be retained, this mindset can be extended to social marginal groups. When we can consider them as another culture or subculture, it will allow us to accept the difference and form a harmonious world.



## 5. CONCLUSION

This study started with the need for multicultural education and tried to show how we can implement multicultural learning within media education especially in informal and nonlocal settings, including online platforms for youth. The findings of the study indicate that overall session of combining cultural studies to geographical class aided the students to engage in and to develop their media literacy. Moreover, the project gave the participants a chance to rethink concepts of the difference and others. Regarding the research question 1, the youths' understanding of media and having critical perspective supported their cultural learning. It was not very clear regarding research question 2 if the youths' media literacies skills supported their individual identity development due to lack of data.

The media contents, I used in my research, contains a lot of storytelling. The effect of using storytelling procedure stood out in the participants' media creation, starting from PowerPoint presentations, meme, to RPG game sample. Bernard (2006) claimed, as storytelling process includes selecting a topic, carrying on the research, writing scripts and composing a storyline by oneself, teaching in storytelling method is an efficient way to produce a creative storyteller (Bernard, 2006). Most of the participants' work had a story covering Finnish culture, one had his life plan, another had a good point showing the importance of respecting cultural diversity, and the other made cultural quiz inside the game scenario.

Returning to the conclusion of the research questions, it was hard to draw a founded conclusion with the small target group. Still, it seemed youth's understanding of media contents supported multicultural learning. The participants' who had more interest in culture and media wrote more things about the media contents provided to them. Additionally, these participants found the core concept of this study; the importance of multiculturalism. Their previously existing understanding of multiculturalism, which participants had before this project, might have led them to engage more than others. The participants' multicultural understanding seemed to be not fully dependent based on traveling because all of those who submitted 1<sup>st</sup> essay mentioned traveling abroad, anyhow, showed a different level of interest in contents of this project. Secondly, limited to this project, participants' engagement influenced MIL skills and evidently shown high-effort media creation compared to those who were not or less engaged. Lastly, through the interviews and media creation, participants commented and expressed that their own culture or others' culture can influence in developing their

individual identity. Taking only into the account those who participated till the end, it seems youths' media literacies skills enhanced their understanding of media contents and this was reflected in their media creation work. Those who had better media literacies skills shared and showed their identity development through the media creation. Still, it is hard to say those who did not express their media literacies skills lacks development of their identity.



FIGURE 22. **Cycle for reaching the multicultural stage**

This study failed to be incorporated into regular school curriculum. However, based on this study, there should be more studies performed to find the optimized tools to develop youths' multicultural perspective within media education. Additionally, there should be more attempts at incorporation into regular curricular and increase of teachers' education. To become a small help in such movement of increasing teachers' education, I participated in organizing 'Afternoon for teachers' (<http://blogs.uta.fi/mediakasvatus/2017/10/03/afternoon-for-teachers/>). The event was organized in

order to update the latest theories and pedagogies to teachers, especially focusing on media literacy and ICT (Information and Communications Technology) field. Participating teachers got chance to experience up-to-date VR contents and chance to further question to those who made the VR. Additionally, they participated in group activity based on ‘Camera as a Pen’ theory. This seminar supported the teachers to implement new teaching skills in classrooms. Moreover, the event was future-oriented cooperation for further collaboration with upper secondary students. Many a little makes a mickle. Eventually, such attempts will lead us to develop more learning materials and our intercultural sensitivity. In the long run, we will reach the multicultural stage as shown in *Figure 22*. As Sahlberg (2011) noted, cogwheels of educational, political and cultural works differently based on contexts (Sahlberg, 2011, p.6). If these cogwheels properly engage each other, it will make the education system succeed like a well-oiled machine. Hopefully, our future will head towards the multicultural stage with every cogwheel engaging properly.

I would like to close this study with a call for recognizing equal value of culture. Each culture itself has no inferiority or superiority. The nations have relative dominance in different areas such as business, economic, technique, environment, lifestyle, citizenship, geographical characters, and resources. Sometimes, it seems like some nations have definite superior on majority areas on the others. However, this value-hierarchized evaluation has been made up by nations with power. In order to help students with a varied cultural background to harmonize, the teachers should try to avoid using bi-polarized terms and try to use metaphors when they bring up some topics. Multicultural education implemented in MIL would be cost-effective in the long-term compared to the cost to overcome ‘hard and soft conflicts’ which come from racket between cultures. MIL is considered as a civic competence, which can develop our critical thinking. To link this to Clark’s claim, such civic mind and critical thinking have a high possibility of leading us to the multicultural stage (Clark, 2003, p.28).

It is yet true, the distribution level of the internet and media technology differs worldwide. However, internet and media technology is spreading out in every direction of corners. Media is a privilege of our generation but also a weapon that can harm others and ourselves. This is the reason why we require proper media education. The closer we get to each other through media, the better to know how to live together with others forming a sustainable life. Olli-Pekka Heinonen, former Minister of Education of Finland, mentioned a Latin phrase “*non scholæ sed vitæ discimus* (We do not learn for school but for life)”. We should not just learn for my own life but for *Our* life.

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## **Appendix 1(1)**